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

AMBASSADOR RICHARD M. MILES

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS

Oslo, Norway. Vice-Consul	1967-1969
Washington. Serbo-Croatian language training.	1969-1970
Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Consul	1970-1971
Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Second Secretary, Political Section	1971-1973
Washington. Soviet Desk	1973-1975
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Moscow. Second Secretary. Political Section	1976-1979
Washington. Yugoslav Desk Officer	1979-1981
Washington. Politico-Military Bureau. Deputy Director, PM/RSA	1981-1982
Washington. Politico-Military Bureau. Acting Director, PM/RSA	1982-1983
Washington. American Political Science Association Fellowship Worked for Senator Hollings. D-SC	1983-1984
Belgrade. Political Counselor	1984-1987
Harvard University. Fellow at Center for International Affairs	1987-1988
Leningrad. USSR. Consul General	1988-1991
Berlin, Germany. Leader of the Embassy Office	1991-1992
Baku. Azerbaijan. Ambassador	1992-1993

Moscow. Deputy Chief of Mission	1993-1996
Belgrade. Chief of Mission	1996-1999
Sofia, Bulgaria. Ambassador	1999-2002
Tbilisi, Georgia. Ambassador	2002-2005
Retired	2005

INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 21, 2007. This is an interview with Richard Miles, M-I-L-E-S. Do you have a middle initial?

MILES: It's "M" for Monroe, but I seldom use it. And I usually go by Dick.

Q: You go by Dick. Okay. And this is being done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Well Dick, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

MILES: I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1937. It was kind of an accident of birth; my mother was a Hoosier and my father was a southerner from Louisiana. The marriage didn't last and my mother took me back to Indiana so I'm really a Hoosier.

Q: Okay. Well, let's start—first just to get an idea—I don't know how significant your father was in your upbringing. Where does the Miles come from?

MILES: It's from my father and I guess I was an infant when he and my mother separated so I didn't actually meet my father until I was about 45. It's kind of a soap opera story. My wife, Sharon, felt that the children should know their paternal grandfather, that side of the family, because that is their name. So, happily, he's from the South; I think if he had been from the North it would have been more difficult to find him. But she knew, from my mother, the town that his people were from and she looked in the phone book and wrote letters to all the Mileses there. She got some very nice, interesting replies back, including one from a black man who said he was pretty sure that he was not my father but he would have been proud to have been. Sharon had described me as a diplomat and mentioned our having been in the civil rights movement too.

But anyhow, she got a letter back from my father's brother, Monroe Miles, and there was enough corroborating evidence so that it was clear that he was my uncle and he arranged a meeting. I went on down to Shreveport, where Monroe still lived, and he drove me over

to meet my father. We met on the Louisiana side near the bridge across from Vicksburg, Mississippi, and then we had a pleasant, if awkward lunch near there, took a photograph, and that was that. It was kind of like a soap opera, really, and we never met again, although I've stayed in touch and am still in touch with his brother, Monroe, who was an Army chaplain most of his life and then retired, had his own church and is now totally retired. Monroe has visited us overseas, so I've gotten to know the family in that way. My family has become particularly close to Monroe's daughter, Linda Miles, a very sweet and talented woman.

Q: Just to get an idea of where people come from and so forth—

MILES: I don't come from a typical Foreign Service background.

Q: There really isn't a typical Foreign Service background.

MILES: Well, the stereotypical background.

Q: That's what I am trying to get at. Do you have any idea where they lived? Was it a Southern family?

MILES: Well, yes, they were from around the Shreveport, Louisiana, area and it was a reasonably extended family. Back in the 1930s, my father was a railroad man working security—I don't remember the name of the railway company which went up to Chicago, probably the New Orleans-Chicago route—and somehow met my mother, in Indiana. She was a high school graduate and her parents lived on a farm and I guess there was a romance or whatever and they were married. But it didn't take, there was just a big cultural difference, you know, between the North and the South. And it's kind of funny because when I met my southern relatives finally and got to know them a little bit, somehow in the course of the conversation it came out that they, all those years, for like 45 years, they had been convinced that my mother was a Catholic. They are Protestants and they thought that was why the marriage broke up, but in fact we were Protestants too so it was just, you know, myths grow in the families and there you are.

Q: Okay. Let's talk about your mother. Where did she come from?

MILES: Well, my maternal grandfather was a farmer and a nurseryman. He worked for many years for the Hobbs Nursery, an old and large, commercial nursery near Bridgeport, Indiana. His specialty was shrubs and bushes—just like in the movie *Time Bandits*. The nursery was in the country then but Bridgeport has long since been incorporated into the city of Indianapolis. His avocation was buying rundown small farms, rehabilitating them, fixing the fences, putting a pond on them, painting the barn, that kind of thing. He really enjoyed doing this. At some point he would sell the farm for a small profit and then buy another one and fix that one up. So he was a combination of a professional nurseryman and a farmer. He taught an extension course occasionally at Purdue University so he was not an unsophisticated man although I don't believe his education went beyond high

school either. He was successful enough so that in his retirement he, my grandmother and one of my mother's sisters bought a small hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Q: Of course in that era very few—

MILES: Not from Indiana anyhow.

Q: Well, you know, my family came from the Chicago area. My brothers were the first to get college degrees although they read a lot.

MILES: Oh, everyone read, yes.

Q: Where did you grow up?

MILES: In Indiana pretty much. My mother married again; I went through several names, by the way. In fact, when I came in the Foreign Service you had to list aliases or other names on the security clearance form. I had several because the custom at that time, at least where I lived, was that you would use your stepfather's name without legally acquiring it and so I never used the name Miles until I went into the military service years later. After my mother and father were divorced, my mother married a fellow named Max Lehman whose parents were also farmers in the eastern part of Indiana, very rural—no indoor plumbing, for example. They must have gotten married while I was still an infant; anyhow, I really have few memories of their marriage. During the war he went off to work on the Hanford plutonium project as an accountant.

Q: In Washington state.

MILES: In Washington state. We never heard from him all during the war. At that time you received—I remember getting very tightly rolled comic books as a present from him and it always was with a mysterious post office box number—I think out of Chicago. I think that was where the post office box was, and he was not allowed to return home, so for all those years we didn't really know where he was or what he was doing and that complete separation ruined that marriage. So my mother was working, during the war, for the Allison aircraft engine company in Indianapolis, testing aircraft engines; these were the proudest moments of her life.

Q: Turned out to be a very good engine for the Mustang, I believe.

MILES: The P-51 Mustang, the P-40, the P-38, the P-39 Airacobra. It was a decent engine and she tested the engines before they were put into the airplanes. They mounted each engine, propeller and all behind a big test stand faced with ballistic glass and then she started it up and put it through its paces, testing the oil and gas consumption and the manifold pressure and all that. It was exciting work and she had "yes or no" authority. If the engine did not meet the required specifications, they would take it out and tear it down and rebuild it until it did meet them. After all, engine performance could be a life or death matter for the pilots of those aircraft. She was very proud of her contribution to

the war effort. Anyhow, at some point during the war, she met my last stepfather. His name was Mann, Louis Mann.

Q: M-A-?

MILES: M-A-N-N. And that marriage did last until his death almost thirty years later. But that meant that she had to divorce Max Lehman and did so I guess around 1945. I was eight at that time and I did not really know anything about this. During the war, I was passed between Max Lehman's parents and my mother's parents. I never saw my stepfather at that time and I only saw my mother on rare occasions, and so I didn't know anything about these difficulties until the very end of her second marriage. My stepfather, Max, did return in what must have been the spring of 1945, probably to deal with the divorce, but my memory of that visit is very slight. I was eight years old in 1945. So then she married my last stepfather, my second stepfather, in 1945 in Indianapolis. He was more of a city type. At that time he was running a small vacuum cleaner sales and repair shop and that is what he did all of his life, basically. So I learned that trade too, by the way.

Q: "Usisivac". Was that not, I think that is Serbian for vacuum cleaner. My wife learned it.

MILES: I don't know what it is in Serbian, but that sounds right. I know it in Russian—it's "*pylesos*" in Russian. But I don't know the Serbian word for vacuum cleaner. What was it again?

Q: "Usisivac".

MILES: Yes, it was something like that: vacuum or pump for dust. That's what you're saying.

Q: Yes.

MILES: "*Pylesos*" in Russian, which is "dust sucker", I guess.

Q: Moving off that subject, let's talk about growing up.

MILES: I'm a good vacuum cleaner mechanic, by the way. If I ever had to fall back on another trade, I guess it would have to be repairing vacuum cleaners. In fact, to jump ahead about 40 years, on the very day that I retired finally from the Foreign Service, I went to get a part for a Hoover vacuum cleaner that I had taken out of storage to start our house up—and I used the technical nomenclature to ask for the part. Instead of saying "brush", I said "agitator" because, for that type of vacuum cleaner, that's what it was called professionally, and the guy behind the counter said, "Do you know about vacuum cleaners?" And I said, "Yes, I used to repair vacuum cleaners." Now, I'm almost 70 years old and haven't done that kind of work since I was 25 or so. And then he said, "You know, we need a good mechanic, would you be interested?" So, the very day I was retired

from the Foreign Service I was offered a job as a vacuum cleaner mechanic. Kind of funny, really. I should have taken it. Very satisfying work, dirty as all get out, but satisfying.

Q: Well then, as a kid, let's start with what you remember. Did you grow up, I mean, your early years were as a farm kid?

MILES: Yes. Because from the time when my memory started, age three or four—this would have been about the beginning of the war and until 1945 when I was eight—those formative years I lived on these rural farms. No running water, no indoor plumbing; a pretty primitive life, but not untypical for the Midwest in the 1940s. And it was only after my mother married my second stepfather that we began to live in a city environment. But then, in 1947, and I never knew quite why he did this, he moved the whole family—my mother, his three daughters and me—to Roanoke, Virginia. He had a vacuum shop in Roanoke but for three years we lived in a very rural environment about 13 miles outside of Roanoke; the first year in a log cabin, an old log cabin. It was on the edge, literally on the edge, of the Jefferson National Forest. We were heating the place with a fireplace only, could not even afford a stove that first winter, and again with no running water and no indoor plumbing or anything like that—really very primitive. I took Sharon and my son Richard back to see that cabin years later and they absolutely could not believe that I lived in that place. And my stepfather had his shop in town, and he and my mother commuted every day to run that shop. But my three stepsisters and I lived out in the country. I thought it was a very idyllic life. I was back in the country, which I have always preferred. My sisters hated it, of course, because they were young teenagers and city people to boot. But I was ten years old and back in the country again and in a very beautiful part of the country at that.

Q: Tell me a little about the schooling.

MILES: In those days, in the areas where I went to school, there was not much testing or anything like that and, given the kind of background I came from, the teachers didn't really expect that I would do much of anything in life except do what my parents had been doing. So there was no talk of college or anything like that.

Q: Advanced placement or…?

MILES: You're joking, right? No, no, there was none of that. I just went from one grade to another and tried, like a lot of black kids do in the ghetto today if they are smart, I tried not to stand out. So I'd hold back. Sometimes I'd know answers to questions in the classes but I wouldn't give them. Still, I read a lot and I was always a good reader.

Q: Where did you get your books?

MILES: Well, from the school library. You know, my parents didn't have a lot of books around. They weren't anti-reading, but they didn't have a lot of books either. There were no public libraries around so it was years later before I became almost obsessed with

public libraries. I still am. So the books came from the school and I suppose I didn't read as much as I could have or should have but I simply did not know these things. I mean, I was very ignorant in the dictionary sense of the word and didn't get much guidance from anybody, parents, family, or teachers. So I can remember only a couple of teachers from my early schooling who saw something a little different and tried to single me out a bit. I am still very grateful to them for that kind of encouragement. But they were careful not to—and I think I'm grateful for this too—they were careful not to plant too vivid a dream in my mind. I think they didn't want to get me all wound up only to see me fail at any higher aspirations and become disappointed and frustrated. They never did that. They just kind of encouraged me in whatever quiet ways they could. I can remember when I was in the sixth grade, a teacher, Dorothy Thompson, I still remember her name, calling me back into her fifth grade class because she had these records, *I Can Hear It Now*, the Edward R. Murrow series, and she wanted me to hear them.

Q: Oh, yes, Edward R. Murrow. Yes.

MILES: And she thought I would be interested in them and I was; I was fascinated by them. And it was that kind of mild encouragement that I got from time to time that was very instrumental in slowly building a desire to do something different and exciting. But nothing much happened really until I went to high school. By then we had moved back to Indiana. I attended the first half of the ninth grade at Ben Davis High School, a small school on the outskirts of Indianapolis, one semester. Then we moved down to Bloomington, Indiana, and I went to the public high school there, my stepfather again having a small vacuum cleaner repair shop. Actually it was located in an out-of-the-way corner in a storage area of a local department store.

Q: As he moved—

MILES: Yes, as he moved from place to place. He would work a territory out and then he would move to another place, kind of like slash and burn agriculture except on a commercial basis.

Q: Well, I guess vacuum cleaners don't break down that often.

MILES: No, and once you have cleaned a territory out, so to speak, you would move on. And we accepted that—it didn't bother us particularly. It bothered my sisters a bit, but it didn't bother me. Probably helped prepare me for the Foreign Service.

Well, so I wound up in Bloomington, Indiana, going to the local high school and basically I took the easy way out, again not being prodded by anybody. So I was what they called an industrial arts major. I took woodshop with the vague idea of being a carpenter or some damn thing, a cabinet maker, you know. Again, it was all very vague in those days. No one seemed to care much. What being an industrial arts major meant was I was able to avoid certain academic subjects like algebra or geometry. I was able to get out of school at 2:00 in the afternoon and go to work. And that's what I did. I'd ride my bike down to the department store and repair the vacuum cleaners that my stepfather had been

able to bring in. And so the only intellectual subject I took during that entire time in Bloomington was German—probably for the same reason I was interested in those Edward R. Murrow records. It had the scent of something different and, maybe, exciting. So, anyhow, there I was, an industrial arts major taking a class in German. And I still remember the list of the prepositions and their required case endings and things like that and I can still recite them from those days; I had an excellent teacher. But German was only offered every other year and so, when that was gone, I lost interest in the school. In Indiana at that time you could quit school when you were 16. I was that age, had finished two years of high school, and we were just about to move to Richmond, Indiana, to yet another town and another school, and I said to my parents, "I'm not starting school again. I've had it with high school. I'm not learning anything. They don't teach German at the high school in Richmond and I'm just going to quit." My parents didn't like that. They were not at all happy about it, but I did quit so I never actually finished high school; I simply quit when I was 16.

Q: Your half—well, they were your stepsisters?

MILES: Right.

Q: Were they older than you?

MILES: They were all older, yes. One died when she was a teenager. She had a congenital heart problem. She died in Bloomington. The other two are twins. They are still alive and I'm still in touch with them. One of the twins, Louise, lives in Richmond, Virginia, so we see each other when we visit our son Richard, who also lives in Richmond. The other twin, Lois, lives in San Diego.

Q: What about—I mean just to get a little feel—how about your family as far as politics? Did you get any feel—?

MILES: I don't recall anything about the politics on my stepfather's side. But my mother's parents were New Deal Democrats, Yellow Dog Democrats, and, probably because of that, so am I. But after my mother and stepfather moved out to California, my mother became a very conservative Republican, a Goldwater Republican, rather far to the right, I would say, in American terms. I don't recall my stepfather ever being much interested in politics. But Sharon and I are Yellow Dog Democrats.

Q: Did politics play any role in the growing up process?

MILES: No, not really.

Q: For example, was there a newspaper?

MILES: No, I don't remember anything like that. The only time I can remember my parents reading the newspaper was in Indiana around 1950-51 when I delivered the

Indianapolis Star to customers in the little town of Bridgeport—and they only read that because it was free for them due to my paper route.

I can remember in Indiana—it must have been in Bloomington—as a young boy going to attend a rally by then Senator Jenner. Senator Jenner was a big supporter of Senator McCarthy.

Q: Oh, yes. Yes.

MILES: Pretty far out to the right. And it didn't occur to me that that attending this rally was odd or whatever; it was just the tenor of the times. I wasn't terribly political and the family wasn't political really.

Q: Religion—was religion part of your growing up at all?

MILES: No, no. It was typical, I think, of that time and place. My parents—I don't even know what their religion was, specifically. They would usually, when we were in a place where there was a nearby church, they would make us kids go to Sunday school and church on Sunday. It would be either Methodist or Baptist, depending on which one was closer, and that was it. They never themselves pitched up in church the entire time of their adult lives except maybe when they got married—no, not even then. I remember distinctly: they were married in my stepfather's house in Indianapolis. Well, they did attend the church weddings that we kids had later in life.

Q: How about for, well, even as a kid, I suspect, where some of the places you lived with no electricity, the radio wasn't part of your—

MILES: No, there was electricity. Thanks to FDR, we did have that; we were not that isolated. And I can remember, it was a nice memory actually, when I was living—where would it have been?—with my first stepfather's parents in their farmhouse near Fairland, Indiana, and either they didn't have electricity or they didn't have a radio, I don't recall which. My parents—my mother and my then stepfather—had a little, what we would call a cottage, on the far end of the farm property, and they had a radio down there. Both my parents were away in the war industry but I was allowed to go down to that empty house and listen to *Terry and the Pirates*. I will never forget that program. I was fascinated by *Terry and the Pirates* and still am, in fact.

Q: The adventure series about, what were they, soldiers of fortune in China.

MILES: Yes, yes. It started before the war but, of course, by the time I got into it, it was during the war and I just found it fascinating. Everything from the cacophonous sound at the beginning—you know, the banging of cymbals and drums—to the adventure story itself. But that was the only radio program I listened to and why I was interested in that, I haven't the foggiest idea. But it took some effort to listen to that program. I had to walk about a half a mile to get to the house, let myself in, turn the radio on, listen to it, turn the

radio off, close the place up and walk back to the other house. And I was only six or seven.

Q: I come out of the radio age and all, and I remember a whole series of programs: Little Orphan Annie and The Lone Ranger and all that.

MILES: When my parents moved to Virginia—again it was a very rural area, I mean very primitive where we lived—we had electricity and the neighbors had a radio. By then radio played a bigger role for me. I was ten to thirteen at that time. I used to listen to *The Lone Ranger* and these other stories with the neighbor boys. So it was kind of a substitute for reading. I can remember sitting in my stepfather's car while he listened to the Roanoke Red Sox night baseball games on the car radio. I would always fall asleep before the game was over. Now, there's an old-timey memory for you!

Q: How about movies? Were you pretty far away from movies?

MILES: The only time I remember movies when I was growing up was, again, living with my first stepfather's parents on their farm near Fairland, Indiana. About once a month my grandfather would take me along with him into the little town of Fairland where we would both get haircuts and then we would go see a movie. It was usually a double feature with a Western or two and that was it. Years later, in Virginia, they would show a feature film once in a while at the school. But it cost a dime and I never had that dime. We were desperately poor during those three years in Virginia. My stepfather eventually went bankrupt and we went back to Indiana in 1950. I remember being with him when he broke the sheriff's padlock on the door of his shop in Roanoke and I helped him steal and carry out to the car some of his tools so that he would be able to make a living once we got settled back in Indiana. I was 13 years old in 1950.

Q: In Bloomington did you ever have any contact with the University there?

MILES: There was a great town-gown separation at that time. Later in life, I went back to Bloomington and got a graduate degree at Indiana University. I'm one of those people who lived on both sides of that divide so I can talk about it reasonably objectively. There were two high schools in Bloomington: there was University High School and then there was Bloomington High School, our public high school, and the students from one school sort of hated, envied or feared the other.

Q: Well, of course.

MILES: And there was great rivalry. The students in the public high school where I was thought that the students at University High School were elite snobs. Probably the ones at University High School thought we were all lower class. None of us actually had any real contact with the other, of course. These differences were all pretty much in our minds.

But the only other contact I had with Indiana University at that time was interesting. The makers of Crest toothpaste ran a famous experiment at the University using fluoride in

toothpaste for the first time and somehow I volunteered or was volunteered for it. I guess I was about 14 or 15 then. I had to bike up to the place where the dentists were and I don't recall if they cleaned our teeth or just examined them. Then we were divided into two groups. One group was given the toothpaste with the fluoride in it. We didn't know it was Crest at that time but we knew that some toothpaste had fluoride in it and some didn't. I never knew which one I got. I believe that was the first time in my life I had ever been to a dentist. That was my only contact with the University.

Q: In high school—did you graduate from high school?

MILES: Never did. When I was in the Marine Corps I took the GED test, but in fact by the time I got out of the service my parents had moved to California so I went out to California too. In California at that time a high school degree was not required to go to a junior college if you were 21 or older. And at the junior college, if you kept your grades up, if you took and passed certain required courses like high school level algebra, high school level geometry, high school level English, then you could march right along all the way to the university, which is what I did basically. So, in fact, the GED was not required. I think that's a wonderful system and I hope it's still in effect.

Q: When you moved to California how old were you?

MILES: Well, I was just out of the Marine Corps so I was 20, almost 21.

Q: Okay, so tell me about the Marine Corps. Well, before we go to that, you left high school about the age of 16?

MILES: Yes. And then I worked for my stepfather. By then we had moved to Richmond and I worked for him full-time for almost two years.

Q: What was it like? This is Richmond where?

MILES: Indiana.

Q: Indiana. Indiana is sort of a peculiar state in a way.

MILES: It has always been—

Q: There is a southern Indiana and a northern Indiana.

MILES: Yes, there's quite a split.

Q: Where were you? In the southern part?

MILES: We were in between. We lived mostly in the east-central part of the state. If you were to draw a straight line from Indianapolis over to the Ohio border we would have lived in small towns or just in the country on both sides of that line. Route 40, the old

National Road, follows that line. So the areas where I lived would be near Fairland and Boggstown in Shelby County, then later, Connersville, and Richmond; in other words, the eastern part of the state but with a slight tendency, maybe, toward the southern part.

Q: Did you—did race ever—I mean, we're talking about the high school years before you went into the Marine Corps. Did race come into what you were doing where you were?

MILES: No. I suppose there were blacks around but they weren't anywhere near where I was. You heard the occasional racial joke but there was no real racial prejudice because there was not anyone to be prejudiced against. So we were, again, probably fairly typical of middle western Americans, sort of neutral on the race issue. You would hear prejudicial remarks, against blacks mostly, occasionally against Jews or Catholics, but mostly blacks, but not often. They simply weren't around to provoke those kinds of remarks and there was not—you didn't see actual prejudice or discrimination because everyone was pretty much white and Protestant.

Q: What about immigrant communities? When I was in Yugoslavia, I think I was responsible for transferring the entire female population of Macedonia in the town of Ljubojno to Gary, Indiana, and I was wondering whether you ran across—

MILES: No, that population would belong more to northern Indiana. My wife Sharon is from Gary and has a Serbian aunt who married into her family. My mother-in-law Betty, when she visited us in Yugoslavia, would come out with the occasional word in Serbian and we'd say, "How do you know that?" And she'd answer, "Oh, I speak 'Slavish'." She would say "Slavish" because there were so many immigrant communities in Gary, but she didn't know Polish from Serbian or whatever, but she would pick up the occasional word. It was kind of funny, years later out of the university and all that, studying Russian and Serbo-Croatian and living in those countries, to find my mother-in-law being able to understand some of the words which she had heard from her neighbors back in Gary, Indiana, in the 1930s or 40s. But that was Gary, which is a different country almost compared with the rest of Indiana.

Q: Before you went in the Marine Corps, you got out, you were 16, 17, or so: were you beginning to sense a lack of education? I mean, were you beginning to educate yourself or not?

MILES: You know, I never sensed a lack of education. When I look back on it it's almost laughable, but no one ever told me that I was smarter than other people or dumber than other people; no one ever told me that I had the ability to do some things faster and easier than some other people. I mean this was just not ever explained to me. If you had said to me—if you had been a high school counselor, for example, and you had called me in and said, you know, "You are really doing well in German. Have you ever thought about being a Foreign Service Officer?"—I would have thought you had come from Mars. A conversation like that would have meant nothing to me whatsoever. So, no, I knew that I read more than most people, but that was about as far as it went.

By the way, this may be a good place to express my gratitude to our wonderful, American public library system. When I lived in Bloomington and in Richmond—in other words, from the time I was 13 until I was 17—I would ride my bike down to the public library. I would check out as many books as the basket on my bike would hold, take them home and devour them without any particular pattern to it or anything. It would be anything from a World War II book of pictures to something serious to read. Then I'd take that lot back and check out another basketful and take that back home and read that. So I read a lot but it was aimless and undirected. I suppose I learned some things from reading all those books no matter how indiscriminately. And I did somehow learn to read faster; I always had, without realizing it, a very fast reading capability. I never knew that until I got out of the Marine Corps and was tested at the junior college. Before that, I never knew that I read fast; I just read, you know, and it never occurred to me it was considerably faster than most people.

That experience of riding my bike to the library and loading my bike basket with books stayed with me. When our children were young and we were living in Alexandria, Virginia—one of the few times we were posted back to the States—Sharon, Richard, Elizabeth and I would get on our bikes and ride to the neighborhood library. We'd load our baskets with books and rush home to start reading our week's supply.

Q: Looking back, did any book stick out in your mind and sort of really grab you?

MILES: I remember two books. One I read, probably in the sixth or seventh grade, was about Daniel Boone and the pioneers in Kentucky and Tennessee. Somehow the concept of the book, that you could explore a totally unknown country, was exceptionally interesting to me. The author described the land and the flora and fauna and everything; it was a beautiful book. The Yadkin River—the very name has a romantic appeal. I regret to say that I don't remember the name of that book. And then the other one was *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Somehow I came across *All Quiet on the Western Front* and it also said something to me—maybe because of my interest in the German language, although it was only years later that I read it in German—and I just really enjoyed that book. Its anti-war message didn't stop me from volunteering for the Marine Corps but I just found the book fascinating. Maybe that book had something to do with my becoming a Quaker later in life.

Q: I just saw the rerun of the movie about two weeks ago.

MILES: It's a fine movie. I don't remember seeing the movie at that time, but maybe I did. Anyhow, the book made a powerful impression on me.

Q: Well, then, you are off to California.

MILES: Well, first the Marine Corps.

Q: Okay. When did you go into the Marine Corps? Where were you?

MILES: I was in Richmond, Indiana, and my stepfather had this small repair shop and so I'd repair the vacuum cleaners for him. By that time I had a car, had a driver's license. We had a free pick-up and delivery service, so a customer would call in, we'd pick up their vacuum cleaner, bring it back to the shop, repair it and deliver it back to them. So I did all that, basically. And my stepfather would sit around on his ass and not do much of anything. I didn't resent that so much because I got paid for my work, and he bought the car for me, and I was treated like an adult and so on. I didn't have any resentment, I believe, but I was also getting restless. The hormones were beginning to swirl around there and I did somehow feel that there was more to life than repairing vacuum cleaners in Richmond, Indiana. And so about the time when I turned 17 I began to agitate a bit to my parents to let me join the Indiana National Guard or something like that. They didn't want me to do it for whatever reason; they never said why exactly. And as I got closer to my 18th birthday I began to say things like, "When I'm 18, I can do what I want." And they still were opposed to it. Then I read somewhere that the GI benefits from the Korean War were going to expire on December 31, 1954. Now, I was going to be 18 on January 8, 1955. I had been talking to the Marine recruiters and was determined to join. As a 17 year old, I had to get the signature of one parent and neither of them was willing to sign. So it was quite a tearful scene, really. I went to both of them, my stepfather just refused, simply refused to have anything to do with it even though he had been in the Marines himself in World War I. Maybe I was copying him, I don't know. But my mother said she just didn't want me to do it and I said, "Well, look, in 10 days I'm going to go anyhow and this way, whatever these benefits are, I'll be able to take advantage of them if you sign now." And so, to make a long and somewhat painful story short, she did sign and I entered the Marine Corps on December 28, 1954. Now, they later extended the benefits for I think another 60 days or something like that so a lot of that Sturm und Drang went for naught. But, of course, I didn't know that at the time and so that's why I came in when I did. But I would have come in anyhow. As soon as I was 18 I would have come in—GI benefits or no GI benefits.

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

MILES: Well, from December of '54 until December of '57. It was peacetime, it was just after the end of the Korean War.

Q: From your background, you would have found it a little simpler to take basic training in a real city?

MILES: Probably, yes. There are these jokes, you know, about the country boy writing back from boot camp saying, "Boy, this is great; you get to sleep until 5 o'clock and you get three big meals a day."

Q: And shoes.

MILES: Shoes, yes. It actually was a little bit like that. You know, the Marine Corps—you've probably talked to a lot of people who have been in the Marines. Marine Corps boot camp is a unique experience and it's very interesting to see how former Marines,

even combat veterans, will often talk about their boot camp experience as, in a strange way, being rougher than their combat experience. Part of that is, of course, that combat veterans generally don't like to talk about their experiences under fire. Whatever the case, Marine boot camp, was, is and probably always will be a hell of an experience. In boot camp, you don't have a lot of time to "think" about anything; you're just trying to get through the experience and graduate and be a Marine. You're under stress for four months straight. People sometimes ask me, "How can you be so calm under stress?" My answer is, "You have no idea what real stress is!"

Every Marine has his own very personal understanding of boot camp, but, on balance, I thought it was all right. You know, I was kind of a skinny kid, believe it or not, because I am overweight now, but I was underweight then. I only weighed 138 pounds when I went in but I came out four months later weighing 158 and had miraculously lost a couple inches around my waist in the process. I mean, they really did a number on me. Sounds like those TV ads for miracle diets. And it turned out I was a very good shot, which of course the Marines like, so that singled me out a little bit. And while it was hardly an intellectual exercise, there were certain aptitude tests that you had to take and you also took an IQ test. This was the first time I had ever taken these kinds of tests, so I began to be aware at that age, 17-18, that I was smarter than many people. I could do things other people had a hard time doing. I could learn new things quicker and easier than some others. I could also handle the physical stuff and the stress and I was a good shot, which made me a good Marine—at least up to the point of going into combat. Combat is an entirely different situation and I might or might not have been good at that but, happily, I was never tested by that experience. So, at that relatively young age, I, for the first time in my life, began to realize that I could do things beyond just repairing vacuum cleaners or whatever. Now I did not begin actively to think about college until several years later but as I got closer to the end of my three year enlistment, I became aware of the Foreign Service, and I began to realize that with my Marine experience and with the GI benefits, the world was my oyster. I could do damn near anything I wanted to do and the Marines gave me the ability and the confidence to do that. In the Marines, if someone tells you to climb the wall and walk across the ceiling upside down, you can probably do it, you know. All this self-confidence was just a wonderful thing. Maybe looking back on it now it was slightly artificial, but it seemed real at the time and thank God for it because otherwise I never would have become a Foreign Service officer.

Q: Well, then, talking about your time in the Marines, where did you go?

MILES: Well, the real miracle that occurred in my life, and I have often thought about it, was that the Marine Corps sent me from Indiana to San Diego, California, to go to boot camp. Now, that doesn't sound like much, but it changed my life and I would not be sitting here talking to you today if this hadn't happened. Of course, I don't really believe in Greek mythology, but if something like this had happened to me in ancient Greece, I would have been absolutely convinced that the gods had shown me some special favor for their own reasons and I would have made appropriate offerings for the rest of my life in gratitude.

Luck has played a role in my life and this is a good example of it. The Marines had and still do have only two boot camps; one in Parris Island, South Carolina, and the other in San Diego. Traditionally recruits from east of the Mississippi River have almost always gone to Parris Island. Recruits from west of the Mississippi have always gone to San Diego. But I guess in December 1954 Parris Island was overcrowded, and so they sent our whole contingent from Indiana out to San Diego. That California thing made all the difference in the world to me.

I liked California. I talked my parents into moving out there. I learned about the Foreign Service while serving on sea duty in the Pacific. I went to a truly excellent junior college, Bakersfield College, and I met Sharon, my wife of now almost 50 years, there: we were married in 1960. After all these years, I'm still in a state of disbelief that so much in my life hinged on that simple and unusual bureaucratic decision to send me to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego rather than to the one at Parris Island.

So I went out to San Diego, did well in boot camp and in the follow-on combat training at Camp Pendleton and was assigned to artillery school. I didn't have much enthusiasm for that and when I saw a chance to volunteer for sea duty instead, I did so. Traditionally, Marines are "Soldiers of the Sea", you know—even the Romans had a few Marines. I thought it would be more exciting than firing off artillery rounds, dramatic and militarily useful as that might be.

I had never intended to stay in the service and I thought, "Well, I don't know what sea duty is exactly, but I know there's not a lot of civilian use for artillery experts so I'll take the sea duty." And sea duty was considered to be romantic and exciting and sort of an elite thing, so I volunteered and was accepted for the Sea School in San Diego and, after a short time, went onboard the *USS Lexington* up in Bremerton, Washington. The *Lexington* is a World War II era aircraft carrier. She had been in mothballs for several years until the Navy decided to modernize her and put her into service again. We Marines formed up a new detachment—about 75 men and two officers—and we went aboard in the fall of 1955 while the ship was about to undergo sea trials.

Q: *Enterprise?*

MILES: *Enterprise* class. But when they took her out of mothballs, they modernized the ship. They put a canted flight deck and a hurricane bow and a mirror landing system on her. She was not modernized to the extent of having air conditioning for the crew or anything like that but it was a state-of-the-art carrier when we went on.

We made up a slightly unusual detachment because usually people come and go in the military—rather like the Foreign Service—and, except in certain conditions of unusual stress, you don't form a strong personal bond exactly. Okay, maybe with one or two close friends but, because we all went on together and pretty much all got off together after two years, we did form a bond and many of us still meet. We have a veterans group that we formed up through the internet about five or six years ago and we still meet once a year.

Not of all the Marines who ever served on the *Lexington* but only of that specific detachment, which is a little bit unusual.

Q: During—this is during the, must be the '60s?

MILES: No, it was earlier—'55, '56. In 1957, after I left the ship in the spring of 1957, I ended up in a guard company at a small naval auxiliary air station in Edenton, North Carolina. It was actually a Marine air station but didn't have that title.

Q: Well, what does a sea Marine do in that time?

MILES: Well, you do a variety of things. You can serve as the Captain's orderly or the Executive Officer's orderly. You escort officers to meetings with the Captain or the XO. You are sort of a gate keeper for the Captain or the XO. You pass messages that he doesn't want to pass by phone or through the intercom system. You hand him a cup of coffee from the mess steward. I can still walk around carrying a china cup and saucer full of coffee without spilling a drop. Of course it's easier on land than it is at sea. You drive for the Captain or XO when the ship is in port.

If there's an admiral onboard you may or may not serve in his orderly group; admirals at that time usually brought their own Marines along. But these things have changed now; they don't have Marines on capital class ships anymore, for example. So the ancient trade of "seagoing Marines" has come to an end—except, of course, for the many combat-ready Marines embarked at sea.

Q: They don't?

MILES: No, they recently took them off the capital class ships, where they had been since the time of the Revolutionary War. Many former seagoing Marines were in an uproar about it but that's the way they do it now—or, more accurately, don't do it. Nor are there Marines as guards now on most of the Navy bases or at the Naval Academy at Annapolis. When it comes to the military, I'm something of a traditionalist, and I personally think it was stupid to do that, but they think it's more cost effective to use civilian guards or just the sailors themselves.

Well anyhow, then I guess running down the other tasks for the Marines on ships at that time, you might serve as a guard over what were called special weapons spaces. Only specifically designated people were allowed to enter that space and the Marine on duty there would strictly control the access. Even the Captain or the Admiral, if we had one on board, had to show his ID and we checked his name against our access list before he was allowed to proceed. To stand that duty required us to have a "Q" clearance—for access to special weapons—and that fact will be the cause of a funny story I will tell you later.

You run the ship's brig. A ship that big, with 3,500-4,000 men on it, is always going to have a few people who are going to be locked up for a while. The brig held five prisoners and there was usually a "waiting list" to get in. As I recall, you could keep people in the

ship's brig for 60 days before they had to be sent to a larger brig ashore. By the way, the officers could punish the prisoners in the brig further by actually putting them on a bread and water diet for up to three days.

And then we did ceremonial duty when a VIP was coming aboard or departing the ship. The whole detachment would form up, shoes shined, brass polished and we would present arms and so on—real spit and polish kind of a thing. Just like the 18th century. A bit mindless, but I always rather enjoyed doing it.

Sometimes, of course, tradition can be totally mindless. Here's an example. When the ship was finally commissioned and we went down to the home port of San Diego, the tradition was that a Marine would be assigned at the foot of the officers' gangplank. There would be an enlisted men's gangplank at the aft end of the ship and an officers' gangplank at the bow end of the ship and a Marine would stand there all day and all night and basically salute the officers who went aboard without, however, challenging them in any way. There was one fellow in the detachment who had an IQ even higher than mine and after a little bit of that totally useless work in the sun and during daytime, as I remember—and I will never forget it—he was in his dress blue uniform and he took his white cap with the gold Marine Corps insignia on it, and sailed it like a Frisbee, sailed it up the gangplank, completely through the hangar deck and out the other side into the sea. Took his rifle, bashed it about on the dock and threw the remains into the water, walked up the gangplank without saluting the Officer of the Deck or the flag or anything like that, went down below decks, climbed into his bunk and went to sleep. And he got a Section Eight discharge out of the service for mental difficulties and wound up enrolled at UCLA medical school. I never did figure out if he did that deliberately or if he just cracked up temporarily. They eliminated that post after that. I mean, some adult finally asked, "Why are the Marines doing this?" and the answer turned out to be, "For no reason whatsoever." And there were plenty of other real things to do so we were spared that particularly stupid duty.

Q: Did you go—were there many cruises?

MILES: I made only one cruise because we spent so much time in what they called sea trials, where the ship was still being fitted out, and so we were embarked, so to speak, while it was still tied up at the dock. We stayed tied up there for several months which meant great duty and great liberty because there were no special weapons to guard and no captain onboard and so on. And so we had more liberty than we would usually have had. I remember hitchhiking up to Canada once and also taking the ferry over to Seattle. And I liked the Northwest anyhow—beautiful area up there. I have never breathed such fresh air as I did up in the Northwest—well, maybe in Norway which reminded me of the American Northwest.

And all this time we got sea pay which was lovely because I only made $78 a month and sea pay was another 15 or 20 bucks or something like that. And then—I forgot the question. I'm sorry.

Q: I was just wondering, did you go on any cruises?

MILES: Oh, cruises, yes. Well, so, we were going out on sea trials out of Bremerton, Washington, for one or two days, you know, to test the engines, the catapults and so on, and then they would bring the ship back and tinker with things until they got it right. An aircraft carrier is a very complicated piece of machinery. And then finally we were commissioned and went on active duty, did a lot of flight training operations out of San Diego, and then we made one lengthy cruise to the Far East, which in a way also changed my life, so that cruise was not an insignificant thing for me.

But there are two interesting things about my time on the ship. One, when the ship was in and out of Japanese ports I learned that I had a different attitude about foreigners and foreign culture than most of my buddies did. I remember one guy who made the famous statement, "I am not going to leave this ship because all the Japanese are whores and thieves anyhow and there is nothing there I want to see." So he didn't. He never left the ship during the whole time we were in and out of Japan over the course of that six or seven months long cruise. Incredible.

Q: When I was in Japan I remember I used to take some of my colleagues. There was a man in the Air Force; he would say, "I understand you go out of the base. Can I come with you?"

MILES: Exactly.

Q: I mean—

MILES: Exactly. I had the same experience. I thought being in Japan was the greatest thing since sliced bread; greater even. I was just fascinated by Japan and I used the bar girls as, you know, living dictionaries. I would write down useful phrases and ask them, "How do you say this in Japanese?" And I would write it down. I still have that little notebook. I'll never forget when I went to my first veterans' reunion last year and one of the guys introducing me to his wife, after 40 years now—50 years—after 50 years now since he had last seen me, said to her, "This is Miles. Miles speaks Japanese better than a Jap." And all I ever learned was a few street phrases, you know—"Where is the toilet?" or "That is too expensive." That kind of thing.

Q: Sure.

MILES: The bar girls were greatly amused by my doing this. I remember once when we were going to be in port for a couple of weeks for repairs, I got special, almost unique permission to go visit a Japanese pen pal I had been corresponding with since I was 16. My friend lived in Tamashima, a little fishing village on the Inland Sea not far from Hiroshima. I told the girls what I was going to do and they had written out very carefully in Japanese a little card with instructions for the various conductors and whatnot; you know, like, "Make sure this soldier gets on the train to Fukuoka. Don't let him get lost." And so it was, in those days, a 15 hour train ride each way, much of which was with a

steam train, a little bitty thing, no air conditioning, all the windows open with smoke and ashes swirling in. Male passengers stripped down to their underwear. It was really just like pre-war Japan. Nowadays you could probably make that trip in air-conditioned comfort in three hours. And I finally arrived. Everybody had been very kind and helpful and directed me here and there, helped me buy tea or beer and the bento box lunches which I still like. Really quite an adventure. You would never have guessed that we had fought such a fierce war with the Japanese only ten years earlier.

I spent about a week visiting my pen pal and I am still writing to this woman; she is my oldest friend in the world actually. Married now. We both got married the same year, in 1960. And in fact I got to see her again decades later when I spent a year as a Fellow at Harvard's Center for International Affairs. Our group made a study trip to the Far East. By that time, she and her husband were living in the Kobe-Osaka area. My study group was going to visit Kyoto, so I wrote and asked whether we could meet each other somehow. So she and two of her children came up to Kyoto and we met again; it was a great experience, really.

Q: Yes. Well, during this Japanese thing, did the thought of being overseas in some capacity cross your mind?

MILES: It's a good question and there's an interesting answer to it because, again, the story demonstrates the importance of luck in your life. You know as well as I do that you tend to create your own luck, but nonetheless I have been very lucky, and what happened was this. At the same time that I was just enjoying the hell out of Japan and the other places we visited, there was a young naval officer on the ship who was finishing his Naval Reserve time. He was teaching an evening class in American government. He was probably teaching the class out of boredom and I took the class, also probably out of boredom. He had been selected for the Foreign Service already. And so, in the class on American government, he dwelled on the State Department and the Foreign Service because it was very important to him and he showed us slides that he had taken during a trip to East Germany. Now, this was 1955 or 1956. He showed us slides that he had taken in East Berlin—red flags snapping in the breeze and all that—and he told us about the Foreign Service, how you get to go to these places and you get paid for it. This was very much the Cold War period, you know, so this was pretty heady stuff for a young 19 year old. And so I put one and one together and thought, "Goddamn, this is fantastic!" And I said to myself, without really talking a lot about it—for example, I never told this officer or anyone else, for that matter—that I think I'll get out of the Marine Corps and go to college and become a Foreign Service Officer. But in my mind I did decide to do just that. And that's exactly what I did. Probably one of the few people on earth who did what they decided to do, age 19.

The officer's name was Roger Smith and he did become a Foreign Service Officer, and I'm sorry to say I never did get in touch with him. I should have written him or something.

Q: Well, then—

MILES: He was never in my geographic area, you know.

Q: Well, then you came back and you said you were assigned to North Carolina for a while?

MILES: Yes. There was a small Marine air station out on the North Carolina coast and I did guard duty out there for about eight months. By then, my parents had moved from Indiana to Bakersfield, California. Until that time, neither of them had ever been to California or even west of the Mississippi. So, to make a long story short, they did move out there on my recommendation and again, here's a little bit of luck. After having never been terribly successful in his life, my stepfather made a real go of it in California. He was in his late 50s when he moved to California. I do not to this day understand how he did it, but he got one of the two Hoover vacuum cleaner franchises in Fresno, California, which is a fairly large town and a fairly wealthy town, and he did well with it. And then the Hoover Company offered him the sole franchise in Bakersfield. I had actually planned to go to Fresno Junior College when I got out of the service. I had visited Fresno a couple of times after my parents had moved there, I even had a girlfriend up there and all. Anyhow, they moved down to Bakersfield. And so, without knowing squat about Bakersfield—I had never been there in my life—I joined them there in December, 1957 and that was yet another piece of luck because, in its way, the junior college was actually the best college I ever went to and I went to several. This was a golden period in its history and the college was full of wonderful people; I'm still in touch with some of them and I really owe them a lot. My mentor there was the Dean of Students, John Collins. He later became the President of the College. He's over 90 years old now, is still working, bless his heart, and we've remained in touch over the years.

Rather than laughing me out of the room when I innocently said I wanted to be a Foreign Service Officer, the career counselors at the college said something like, "Gee, we've never had one of those. Let's look in the careers book and see what you need to do." And that's what they did, literally; the book was like an automobile parts catalog, you know, one of those things that's about 1200 pages thick, and they just thumbed through it until they found "Foreign Service Officer" and they said "Oh, well, okay. You've got to take a foreign language and you've had some German so we'll put you back in basic German and, you know, you need to study some government, some economics, you need to study some history; we'll sign you up for those things. You need to make up algebra and geometry and so on." So I did all this and did it well, got into student government, met Sharon, married her the week after we graduated from Bakersfield, and we went on to the University of California at Berkeley.

Q: Let's talk a bit about—

MILES: This is going to take a long time, I can see this.

Q: It is.

MILES: You know, all of our lives, especially if you've been in the Foreign Service or the military for 30, 40 years, your life is very rich.

Q: Well, that's it, and as we build up this collection I feel it is important not just to say, "OK, you went to such and such a post" but also to get the early prep because somebody coming to this will get a much richer feeling about the life.

MILES: I think so too. That's why I'm interested in doing it.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about Bakersfield. I have a connection: my brother was there and my home leave address for a long time was Bakersfield.

MILES: Of all things. I'll be damned.

Q: My brother lived on San Emidio Street in Bakersfield and—

MILES: You and I are probably the only Foreign Service Officers in the world that had Bakersfield as a home leave address.

Q: I never really lived there but I had lived in California. I went to the Army language school. My brother, who lived in Bakersfield, was a geologist. But what about college? You went to what?

MILES: Then it was called Bakersfield Junior College. On the East Coast it's called a community college, but it's the same thing. Now there's a university there.

Q: Yes.

MILES: Before there was just the junior college.

Q: Well, what about Bakersfield? How would you describe Bakersfield as a place?

MILES: In 1957, when I got out, it was still recovering from the great earthquake of 1952, which really just pretty well tore the town apart—

Q: It knocked the hell out of the clock tower.

MILES: Yes.

Q: Which was a big—

MILES: Yes, they saved that clock tower by the way—moved it out to the city museum. The earthquake was pretty serious and it was the making of the town because, before, Bakersfield had just been a dusty oil town in the middle of a semi-desert area with agriculture as a big employer too—potatoes, cotton, melons and grapes—but all irrigated. It's very dry, very dusty and very, very hot out there. Winter was nice from, let's say,

November until March; that's the only really pleasant time of the year. But then with the earthquake, using the insurance money and all that, they rebuilt the town on a more modern, more solid basis. The "new" public library is still a beautiful building. City Hall. Hall of Records. All these buildings were built with insurance money. I don't recall the exact history of the junior college; I think maybe the new campus was built shortly after the earthquake so that when I went up there in 1957 it was still relatively new. The college had been housed on the campus of Bakersfield High School, which is one of these huge high schools with two or three thousand students. My wife Sharon and her brother, Jack O'Brien, went to that high school. And they moved the college to the new campus probably about 1956, so when I went up there in 1958, it was still pretty new, up on a bluff overlooking the town. People in Bakersfield were mostly white although there was a large Hispanic population, some blacks, some Asians, and all solid middle class or poor. There were some wealthy people, of course, but not very many. Most people in Bakersfield did not have a great lot of money; they were all pretty much in the same boat, so it was a town of middle class and lower middle class people with a sprinkling of more wealthy people at the top. Getty Oil has their headquarters in Bakersfield.

Q: Was the junior college sort of profiting from the GI Bill? I mean, there had been this explosion of knowledge after World War II; the vets came back from the war and six or seven years later PhD types were coming out from all over the place.

MILES: Well, this was at the end of the Korean War period and these guys were enjoying their Korean War benefits because they had earned them by joining when I did in '53, '54, before they expired. Then they had served their three or four or five years, so they were getting out in '57, '58, '59 and '60. So, yes, there were a lot of veterans and the veterans had formed a club, a social club on campus, called AVS—something like Associated Veteran Students—and they had taken control of the student body politics because they were older, better organized, more aggressive. People looked up to them and maybe the others were a little bit intimidated—not that there was fighting or anything like that but, you know, for some pimply 18 year old to run against a 23 year old, fairly worldly veteran in a political contest would take some moxie.

Well, in any case, I joined the club not knowing anything about the politics of the place or caring anything about it, just as a social organization, and I was doing fairly well in my classes. After my first semester, what happened was interesting because, when the grades came out, I was one of the few veterans that had above a C average. In fact, it was a pretty high average. Now, you had to have a C average to hold a position in the student government. And they said, the leaders of the club said, "We want you to run for the student court. We need someone to run and since you have a C average, you are it." And I said, "I'm not really interested in any of that so why don't you look around for somebody else?" And they said they had looked around and there were only about two or three of us that had this required grade point average and so, they said, "We want you to do it and we expect you to do it." Well, that simple bit of down to earth politics started a kind of a campus political career and it was in that way that I got to know Sharon. I never did learn how to type and after I was elected to the court, I asked her to take the notes during the few cases that came before the court and type up the results. So, we got to know each

other very well because of that. She later became student body secretary and we continued to work together as I made my way up the political ladder. Again, you kind of make your own luck, you know.

Q: What did the court do?

MILES: Well, not much. If, for example, you were to leave your campaign posters up from these elections beyond a one week period, the court could set a penalty for that. For example, the offender had to perform social work or something. The court would haul you in and say that you and your people have not removed your posters; you are sentenced to eight hours of community work or some silly thing like that. All extra-legal, but, you know, the court had some authority. Ultimately the court could take away a person's student body privileges, so a person might be denied the right to run for a student body office or something like that. Power is, after all, partly in the mind and so the court would levy these "social punishments" and people would comply with them. It was just a form of peer pressure, basically. Much later, in graduate school, I did a lengthy paper on the institution of comrades' courts in the Soviet Union. Our student court was something like that. Of course, we didn't handle any criminal cases or anything like that.

Q: Talk a little bit about your wife. What was her background and how did you meet her?

MILES: We had to take PE at the college. Here I was, a Marine veteran and everything, but nonetheless physical education courses were required. And so it was kind of fun, actually, because it was not like the PE classes I had been used to in high school, which I used to hate. In these classes at the college you could learn how to play tennis, you could learn how to, you know, whatever you wanted to do—social dancing, archery, whatever you wanted. Looking back on it, it was almost like being a member of a country club. I had never known anything like it.

And it was kind of funny in a way. I had never learned to swim in the service—scared of the water for some reason—and yet I served two years on a ship at sea without being able to swim, having flunked the Marine swimming test in training. So I was always a designated "non-swimmer" on the aircraft carrier. And there were quite a few non-swimmers, by the way; it was not unusual. Well, in the old British navy, none of the sailors ever knew how to swim so, in our way, we were very traditional, I guess.

Anyhow, I wanted to learn how to swim and so I took this class where—again, life is so full of ironies—the instructor was a former Marine Corps swimming instructor but he was just very good at it and so, having failed to learn to swim before serving two years at sea, I learned to swim way out in the California desert—in both cases, courtesy of the Marine Corps.

The second semester at the college, I, happily, enrolled in a golf class just to learn how to play golf, no other reason at all, no background in it, never knew anyone in my life who had ever played golf, and, the gods be praised, Sharon took the class too. It was her first semester at the college. She was 18, right out of high school. She took the class because

her father was a serious golfer and, while she knew how to play golf, she wanted to improve her game. And, to be blunt, I was physically attracted to her, all of us running around in these shorts and everything. In fact, as she tells it, I was almost obnoxious in pursuing her. She hit me on the head with a golf club once, by accident—or so she said. I was standing too close to her and when she cocked the club back to begin her swing it hit me in the head. We used to joke about it saying that I saw stars and thought it was love and it was just being hit by a golf club. She went home and told her father about this incident and he said, "Anyone dumb enough to stand that close to a golfer—you need to stay away from that guy." Well, anyhow despite this we began seeing each other more and more seriously. It was 1958, an election year in California. We were drawn to each other because we both wanted the Democratic candidate for Governor, Pat Brown, to win—this in Bakersfield, a very politically conservative town. While neither of us had intended to get married for a while, we decided we would get married when we graduated in June of 1960. We did that and we are still married after all these years.

Q: What sort of courses were you taking?

MILES: Well, I took German for two years, which I thought was pretty good although I found out later that the level I reached was not really good enough for the university. At UC Berkeley, where we went after Bakersfield, German classes were cutthroat. Absolutely sink or swim. And I sank. And then I took what I guess we would call conversational Russian in the evening. They didn't teach it as a regular academic course during the day but they taught it for three hours every Tuesday night or something like that, just to teach you the alphabet and how to say hello and good-bye and all. So I took it from a Pole who spoke good Russian—maybe with a slight accent; I wouldn't have been able to tell at that stage. This was the first Russian I ever studied and I found it difficult as hell. I like learning and using foreign languages but I am not a quick study when it comes to them.

I took government, history and economics, of course, and I also had to take these make-up courses from high school and I really worked at that because I was scared of algebra and geometry. I had never faced anything like that before and so I worked really hard at it. I just thoroughly applied myself to it. I hit the books; I did every inch of homework; I memorized, memorized, memorized and I did quite well with it without ever really understanding it or having any particular aptitude for it. Even to this day I have no real understanding of what that was all about, but it was required and so I took it and did well at least as far as the exams went. Because Sharon and I were involved in student government, we were required to take a course on parliamentary procedure and *Robert's Rules of Order*. The lessons I learned from that course have been invaluable in helping me conduct well run meetings, especially after I became a principal officer and ambassador.

Q: You know, looking back on it, I'm speaking now as a 79-year-old—

MILES: You're ahead of me; I just turned 70.

Q: You know, the algebra and geometry and all, and I sweated blood doing it, and I can't help making a certain question: what the hell was this for? You know, it's fine if you're going to be an engineer or something but for somebody who isn't, I'm not sure—

MILES: It's not worth all the time and effort as an intellectual exercise.

Q: There doesn't seem to be much transference.

MILES: No, no, I never saw it.

Q: I realize it's part of a process to make sure everybody has a chance, but there's so much there that doesn't apply to anything useful, and that really isn't required, outside of—

MILES: It may be it was looked upon as an intellectual exercise or as a device to weed people out. Maybe the idea is, if you somehow couldn't cut it, if you didn't have the discipline and the aptitude to be able to do it, then you should go and do something else, you should do sheet metal work or something like that rather than go on to the university.

Q: Yes, maybe. Anyway, I went through it. It was like basic training.

MILES: I never used it in my entire life—except, and this is not unimportant, to pass the Foreign Service written exam. And then at Berkeley, liberal arts majors had to take a course in what we called "bonehead physics" and physics majors or science and math majors had to take some liberal arts course. It was actually not a bad idea. At the time, however, I thought that it was stupid and I didn't do well in that course because I didn't apply myself, didn't do the homework and often cut class. I guess I was still growing up. The course was taught by Edward Teller, of all things. I like to tell people that I'm proud of having been given a "D" by the Father of the H-bomb. Sharon, who has always been more mature than I, worked hard in that class and got a "C". We still tease each other about that.

Q: You were at the junior college from when to when?

MILES: Well, it was two and a half years. I could have left after two years and gone on to the university but in order to get in synch with Sharon who wouldn't finish her two years at the same time, I stayed an extra semester and took some additional courses. We got married a week after we both graduated and we left Bakersfield in the summer of 1960.

Q: Did you get involved in national politics? For many people of that era, the election of 1960 really got them stirred up. This was the Nixon-Kennedy one. Did politics interest you at all or did that election draw you in?

MILES: Not much at that time, I'm sorry to say. Both Sharon and I had been quite involved in student politics. By then I had become the student body Vice President. I ran for President but lost. And, to add insult to injury, I lost to another fellow from the

Veterans Club. Well, from that episode I learned never, ever, to neglect your political base.

The real political engagement came later at Berkeley and then we began to get involved and, in a way, have remained involved ever since. But at the junior college, scarcely at all except for student politics which was not organized on Democrat or Republican lines—it was purely student politics.

Q: What about information, you know, newspapers, TV or something? I mean, it's part of preparing to be a Foreign Service officer. Did somebody tell you you'd better be reading The Los Angeles Times or The Washington Post?

MILES: No, nobody did at that time. It would have been good advice but they didn't have the sense to do that and at that time I didn't have the sense to do it on my own. So I read very little in the way of newspapers or weekly news magazines. I scarcely watched television either because I was so busy. I was working for my stepfather, repairing vacuum cleaners; I was carrying a heavy course load; and, at least for the first year after I got out of the service, I was something of a party animal. That last factoid may surprise people who have known me all my adult life because I am as far from being a "party animal" as anyone in the Foreign Service. But I guess this was all part of the growing up process and so I did hang out with a pretty rowdy crowd at that time—mostly centered around the Veterans Club.

Q: Well, let me ask the question: here you are in Bakersfield, going to a junior college, you say you want to be a Foreign Service officer.

MILES: Yes.

Q: Did you run across anybody who would look at you and giggle? Particularly in that era, the odds of doing something like that would seem to be pretty astronomical.

MILES: I am so grateful that I was totally ignorant of this process and had no conception of the odds. If I had, I might have been tempted to do something else or try to at least have a back-up plan or something like that, which would have detracted from what I was doing. But I didn't and no one said, "It's admirable that you want to become a Foreign Service Officer, but you're probably not going to make it: it's very difficult. You'd better start thinking about what else you might want to do." No one ever said that to me. I never even met any other student who was interested in being a Foreign Service Officer. Not one of my instructors thought anything about it one way or the other. It was a very interesting phenomenon, really. Ignorance is bliss, as they say.

Q: It was great because it gave you a free—well, I mean, it was probably that confidence building.

MILES: Yes, I had overweening self-confidence. In fact, when I took all these aptitude and personality tests in junior college, my self-confidence was almost artificially high

and John Collins, who became a beloved mentor of both Sharon and me, said, "I don't think I've ever said this to anybody else, but your self-confidence on these tests is too high. You know, you need to think about reality a little bit." But he never said this in terms of, "You're never going to be a Foreign Service Officer;" he just said, "You need to be cautious; don't think you can do every single thing in the world."

He was and still is a very wise man. A World War II veteran himself, he later became President of the College.

Q: When did you go to University of California?

MILES: In the fall of 1960.

Q: Was this at Berkeley?

MILES: Yes.

Q: So you were at Berkeley how long?

MILES: For two years, until 1962.

Q: You still had spill-off from the GI Bill, didn't you?

MILES: Yes, I still had full GI benefits. In fact, I was able to include a year of graduate work later. The rule was if you had enough left to start a semester, the VA would allow you to finish the semester, even if your entitlement had run out. I'm very grateful for those GI benefits.

At Berkeley, we lived in married students' housing. These were old World War II shipyard workers' barracks, and so we lived in what amounts to World War II housing for $42 a month: I'll never forget it. My GI benefits were something like $135 or $138 a month. And Sharon and I continued to work. I had taken a job in Oakland—worst job I ever had in my life, selling vacuum cleaners door-to-door, which I absolutely detested. Happily I was paired with an older salesman. We went out—do you know the Bay Area?

Q: Not too well.

MILES: Well, one day we went over the, actually you go under the mountains, to a town called Walnut Creek. The mountains kind of divide the Bay Area off from the rest of California. So we went over to Walnut Creek where we were going to work that day, and he took me into a vacuum shop which he knew. It was a large shop because they also did electrical motor rewiring—a lot of problems in that area with water pumps and things like that for all the swimming pools and also the irrigation systems and they did all the rewiring of those and other electrical equipment. And my partner said—he was just chatting with the owners—and he said, "Let me introduce Dick Miles here. Dick is starting with us as a salesman. His dad has a shop down in Bakersfield." And the owner

said, “Do you know anything about vacuum cleaners?” I said “Oh yes, I can repair vacuum cleaners.” He said “We need a mechanic.” And I said, “Yeow!” I was the happiest man in the world. And I stayed working for them for the whole two years I was at Berkeley while still going to school full time. They were very nice to me. They would give me time off to do the exams. They would just tell their customers, “You can’t have your vacuum cleaner for the next ten days—our mechanic is studying for his exams.”

And it was so funny: two years later, after I had gotten my master’s degree at Indiana University, I had a little bit of time to kill and I went back to the Bay Area to kill it. I went out to Walnut Creek just to say hello to these nice people and somehow it came up that they were shorthanded. They had just hired a young mechanic who didn’t have much experience and so they said, “You know, if you’re willing to work for the summer, come on back.” So I did. I helped to train the young guy and teach him what the work was like. We rebuilt a whole lot of discarded vacuum cleaners that summer. And when I got my paycheck it was more than I expected and I said, “Thank you for this raise but why are you doing that?” And they said, “Well, you have a master’s degree now.” I thought that was so funny. I was probably the only vacuum cleaner mechanic in the world with a master’s degree—and almost certainly the only one who got paid extra because of it. Very nice people.

Q: Well, of course, being a married vet you were not your typical student at the university.

MILES: Not at Berkeley, no. I was fairly typical back in Bakersfield but not at Berkeley. Berkeley was qualitatively different. No country club atmosphere there. In fact, I was kind of in shock because for the first time in my life I ran into real academic competition. I mean, some of those kids were smart as all get out and so—

Q: So how did—

MILES: For example, that’s where my German language training proved really inadequate for university level German. I had to drop that class, much as I wanted to master German. But, it would have been a full-time job even to bring myself up to the level of the other students much less to compete with them. At Berkeley, all grading was on a curve—you know, only the top ten per cent in the class would get an “A”, with corresponding ratios on down the scale. There was no “free pass.” And, even in the other courses, I really had to study hard, read a tremendous amount of serious stuff and be prepared to use all this to good effect in the various tests and exams. Final exams in those days consisted of two-hour long, written essays on a very narrow choice of themes. Like many former college students, I still have the occasional nightmare about not being adequately prepared for final exams.

Q: I assume that you were not very much involved in campus politics and that sort of thing or were you?

MILES: Totally uninvolved in campus politics, but Sharon had taken a part-time political job while I was out 20 miles away working on vacuum cleaners. In response to a newspaper ad, she took a job as a part-time secretary for the Mayor of Albany, California, the very tiny bedroom community of Berkeley where we lived. The Mayor was a Democrat and she became aware of this network of Democratic clubs in California called the California Democratic Council or CDC. And so, to make a long story short, we became involved in local politics through her job and through these clubs. There were three such clubs in our area. We originally joined one that was really a little bit too liberal for us. Another was a little bit too conservative and then we helped organize one called "The Boat Rockers" that was just right. Sounds like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Q: When you say "too liberal" what do you mean?

MILES: Well, in our opinion, that club spent too much time lobbying and trying to drum up public support for draft legislation that was not likely to get passed. I don't remember the exact details, but the more conservative club didn't want to agitate for anything; it was almost Republican in its "do nothing" approach. The more liberal one was a little bit too far ahead of public opinion, agitating for things that were never going to pass or for things that were premature at that time: gay rights and so on. No serious legislator wanted to touch that kind of thing in 1960. And then the third one was just right. So we were involved in these. I can remember going off with a group to lobby Pat Brown, who was then Governor of California.

Q: This is Brown Senior?

MILES: Yes, the father, who had a very good reputation in California, by the way.

Q: Oh, yes.

MILES: And frankly I don't remember what we were lobbying him about but I do remember going over to Sacramento, making the trip. He received us very graciously in his office; we had a good chat with him. So we were involved in those things, Sharon more than I was, of course, because of her work with the Mayor. Again, I didn't have a lot of time, what with the commuting back and forth to work and the studies and all that. But Sharon was also going to college full time. It was a good life, a very happy period in our lives. We both worked hard, we both did well and we both got our degrees from Berkeley in 1962.

Q: Well, what was your wife studying?

MILES: History. Medieval history.

Q: Medieval history.

MILES: She studied contemporary history as well. She met Martin Malia that way; he was a Soviet studies type. Very brilliant man. Later he came out to Leningrad while I was Consul General there and we got to see him again.

Q: What were you studying?

MILES: I studied political science and Russian. I was now doing academic level Russian and that is very demanding. You know—you've studied it. Especially at a public university where, I forget how the ratio went, you had a class every day, but two or three days of the week, you would be in an enormous group of 300 people and you might utter one sentence a week in class if you were lucky. This enormous class would be taught by a native Russian teacher. The other two or three days, I don't remember the division exactly, you were in a smaller class taught by a student teacher, a teaching assistant, and in that class there would be 30 people. This person would speak very good Russian but would not be a native speaker. Well, you know, you can't really learn a language like that, so making real progress was not easy. But anyhow, that began the serious Russian language learning process for me and I continued that process at Indiana University later on.

Q: What did you do in the summers?

MILES: Sharon and I took summer classes. Again, we were both really serious about our college work.

Q: You mentioned political science and all. What type of things did you focus on? Was there a concentration?

MILES: No, I wouldn't say so. The real reason was that the professor who had a kind of a dead hand on Soviet studies at Berkeley at that time was a Polish émigré named Julian Towster. He had written a book in 1948 which was kind of a classic at that time but, you know, this was already the 1960s and, to make a long story short, he had never written anything significant since then and I frankly don't believe his thinking had progressed much since then either, so that even with my very limited experience, I didn't feel that I was learning much under his direction. So I took a range of classes. I remember well classes in political philosophy—some of the best classes I had were from Sheldon Wolin, who was one of Berkeley's stars, really, in political philosophy and the history of political thought. I learned a lot from Professor Wolin, not only about that subject, the historical aspects of it, but also about logic and reasoning in a political context. He was a wonderful scholar and teacher.

And then I took a number of courses in other subjects like anthropology, for example. I was very interested in anthropology and sociology and took several classes in Chinese culture and history. So rather than being narrowly concentrated, my education at Berkeley was varied. That suited me, actually, and I think it was probably good preparation for the Foreign Service where you never know what the next assignment is going to bring.

Q: Yes, comparative government and—

MILES: Yes, and philosophy. You know, going back to the Greek and Roman philosophers and on to modern times. And Russian—Russian language—which took a lot of my time. I had to study so hard for it. I am not an easy language student; I have to work at it.

Q: Was there a significant campus sort of Marxist group?

MILES: I'm sure there was but I didn't have anything to do with it or any other group on campus.

Q: You weren't interested in Marxism-Leninism?

MILES: No, not at that time. I didn't get much into that at Berkeley—that is, the study of Marxism-Leninism. Sharon knew more about that than I did from the courses she took on 20th-century Russian history. At Indiana University, however, as I became more serious about joining the Foreign Service, serving in the communist world, and using my Russian, I studied Marxism-Leninism more intensely.

Q: Was there much talk about competition? Today Berkeley is just inundated by Asians, extremely hard-working students who scare the hell out of the non-Asian students.

MILES: If you are being graded on a curve, then, yes, as a group, the Asian students, who work very hard, will tend to cluster at the top of a given class, and so the non-Asian students have to work hard also or their grades are going to suffer.

Q: But was that at all a factor when you—?

MILES: No, at that time it wasn't talked about really, at least not in any conversations that I had with anybody. There was a certain number of Asian students, of course, but this was not unusual. The Bay Area has a heavy concentration of Asians. I wouldn't say that competition at Berkeley came from any particular ethnic group or whatever; all the students at Berkeley at that time were competitive. Even to get into the University was very competitive. And looking back on it, it's kind of a miracle Sharon and I got in—two slightly above average students from a small junior college. But our grades were good and our extracurricular activities were good. We had good recommendations and so we did get in. And then we worked our butts off to stay in and to do as well as we could. We both got our share of "A's" at Berkeley and we are very proud of them. Hell, I'm proud of the "B's." I'm not sure about Sharon; she has higher standards than I do.

Q: There were you exposed to anybody who knew anything about the Foreign Service and did you talk to anybody about it?

MILES: No, I never did. No.

Q: Probably just as well.

MILES: Maybe. Again, it was probably for the good. No one ever discouraged me. Probably if I had met someone at Berkeley—let's say a reasonably sophisticated and experienced graduate student or a visiting Foreign Service Officer—they might have seen me coming up with my background—high school dropout, vacuum cleaner mechanic—out of a small junior college, and would have said, "Look, this is good that you're doing this and I wish you luck, but you need to think about an alternate career. You need to have a backup plan. What else might you do?" And then I would probably have begun to take some classes which would have been a waste of time, as it turned out. So, happily, I never received that good advice.

Q: Well, were you in a way preparing yourself for both your future career and the oral exam by reading The New York Times or Los Angeles Times or something?

MILES: Stu, I'd love to say I was, but no, I didn't give it that much thought, to tell the truth, because I wanted to go on for a master's degree and I knew the Foreign Service was still a couple of years off. But I did begin to do that at Indiana University.

Q: So you graduated in 19—?

MILES: Sixty. Sixty-two, sorry.

Q: Sixty-two.

MILES: Right.

Q: Had the Kennedy Administration at all given, you know, "Ask not what the country will do for you, ask what you can do for your country," that sort of thing. Had that permeated your feeling at all?

MILES: I don't remember specifically, but I expect it did encourage me and many others of that generation to serve the society in some way. Later, before I joined the Foreign Service, Sharon and I did apply to join the Peace Corps but we were already active in the civil rights movement and we decided to stay with that instead.

Q: Well, his inaugural, which would be '61—

MILES: Well, what with graduate school looming large in my plans, my thinking had not quite focused on such things but it did begin to do so later. Especially when I was in graduate school, Sharon and I were beginning to think more about the direction of American society, which probably helps to explain how we became involved in the civil rights movement in the first place. We can save that for another episode.

Q: But in Albany, for example, were you being influenced by the civil rights movement or by the activities of Cesar Chavez and that sort of thing?

MILES: Chavez, yes, the Chavez movement. Sharon had done some tutoring with farm workers' children when she was a high school student back in Bakersfield but, again, we were simply too busy at Berkeley. We were aware of Chavez's movement with the Hispanic agricultural workers and we tended to support it, but mostly verbally—although we didn't eat lettuce or grapes during the boycott that Chavez organized. We didn't have any money to support them with or any time to devote to support activities. The supporters would organize grape boycotts and things like that and we would try to follow what they were doing but without getting much involved in it, to tell you the truth.

Berkeley was actually rather quiet at that time. This was 1960 to 1962. It was right after the tumultuous anti-House Un-American Activities Committee demonstrations in San Francisco and just before the famous "free speech movement" on campus. As much as the campus politics involved any significant issues, they were generic issues—freedom of association, freedom of speech, and so on. You could demonstrate if you wanted to but, at that time, the demonstrations lacked a focal point. In any case, we were never much inclined to join in. At Berkeley we pretty much studied hard and worked hard and enjoyed the Japanese and Chinese neighborhoods of San Francisco. We both remember with fondness "Mary's Harbin Bakery." A little bakery and tea room owned by a Russian émigré over in North San Francisco.

Q: You went to Bloomington to get a master's?

MILES: Right.

Q: Well, Indiana, of course, had a very strong—

MILES: Yes, the Russian and East European Institute.

Q: Russian Institute. Was that what attracted you?

MILES: Yes. I applied to Columbia and Indiana and I applied to a third one, though I can't remember which one that was. Anyhow, I was accepted at Indiana and I was very happy to go there.

Q: Well, then you were there '62 to—?

MILES: Sixty-four. Along with Jim Collins, by the way.

Q: Oh, yes.

MILES: Our later Ambassador to Russia.

Q: Yes, I'm interviewing Jim. I catch him from time to time.

MILES: Yes, yes. He has just changed jobs, you know. He's going to become the full-time Eurasia Director for the Carnegie Endowment.

Q: Oh.

MILES: This just happened two weeks, three weeks ago. He's also on the Board of the Open World Leadership Center that I was running for a time.

Q: Yes. I was interviewing Jessica Matthews yesterday.

MILES: She's a very intelligent woman; I like her very much.

Q: Well, then, let's talk a bit about Indiana. How did you find the Russian Institute there?

MILES: I thought it was excellent and it is still excellent, by the way. Somehow they've managed to keep their prestige and their accomplishments up at a very high level. I was on a panel recently at the Kennan Institute and of the five panel members, Steve Cohen, Jim Collins and I were all graduates of the Russian and East European Institute.

Q: This was still a period where places such as this had many people who were émigrés who were carrying on with their ethnic prejudices and all that. You know, Serbs versus Croats and so on. Did you find that the Russian Institute at Indiana had a problem in this regard?

MILES: You're right, these instructors were mostly the post-World War II DPs or children of DPs (Displaced Persons). It was very rare that someone would be able to get out in those days who could represent the modern Soviet Union. I think we had one Soviet student at Indiana, for example, the whole time I was there, and he stuck pretty close to the Party line so he would not get in trouble when he got back. We did have a lot of Russian instructors, native Russian instructors. My Russian was getting to the point where I was able to take courses that were taught entirely in Russian, for example, and these were taught by émigrés, Russian émigrés, and they were excellent courses, by the way. But, at least in class, they were not terribly political people. They were into literature or whatever the subject matter was. The more contemporary subjects in political science or economics or history tended to be taught by non-émigré types, people like Bob Burns and Bob Campbell. My graduate advisor was Darrell Hammer, an expert in Russian and Soviet law. For the most part, these non-Russian professors were people who had spent time in the Soviet Union so they did have some hands-on experience. All in all, I thought the Institute was a fine place to study what I wanted to study.

Q: This is tape two, side one, with Dick Miles.

Did you get at all involved in—well, you did get involved in civil rights, didn't you?

MILES: Slowly.

Q: Well, we'll pick that up the next time.

MILES: Yes, slowly. And really only toward the end of our stay at Indiana.

Q: Yes. But, again, at Indiana, there must have been people who were talking about the Foreign Service and all that. Were you getting anything from them?

MILES: I'll give you credit for persistence but no, not a lot. I think it's probably a result of this confidence that I had, this self-confidence which, except for German class back at Berkeley, I had never had challenged. I'm sure that visiting Foreign Service officers came through from time to time but, frankly, I don't recall ever going to hear one of them. None of my instructors ever said anything about the Foreign Service particularly. And when I took the written exam, I don't remember if it was the end of 1963 or the beginning of 1964, but I passed it without really thinking a whole lot about it. And later, when we decided to do the civil rights thing, I, with what appears to me in retrospect as unreal aplomb, said, that's fine, I'll take the exam again and pass it again later. Of course, the test results were only valid for one year. So it just never really occurred to me that I might not get into the Foreign Service. It should have, and I should have spent more time trying to learn more about it and trying to talk to people who had been in and all, but I didn't do it. Luckily it all worked out. But I did begin; as I indicated in one of our earlier sessions, I did begin to spend much more time reading *The New York Times*, reading scholarly journals. Fortunately, I had a part-time job in the Slavic reading room at the University, so I spent a lot of time looking at even the propaganda magazines from the Soviet Union. So I began to read more about the world and to understand the contemporary world better. I first read Saul Alinsky's book on community organizing in Chicago. This book was tremendously helpful when I was organizing black voters in South Carolina, 1964-1967.

Q: Okay. Well, I've put at the end here where we are so that we know where to pick it up. We'll pick this up around, I guess around '64; you're getting your degree at that time.

MILES: Well, '63. I started with the civil rights stuff in 1963.

Q: Alright. Well, we'll pick this up in '63 at the Indiana University's Russian Institute where we're talking about your involvement in civil rights.

MILES: Right.

Q: You had passed the written exam once and you were going to take it again after a year in the civil rights movement?

MILES: That's right. The way it turned out, it was almost two years later because Sharon and I decided to stay on in the civil rights movement beyond the year we had set aside for this.

Q: Great. Okay. Today is the 1st of March, 2008.

MILES: 2007.

Q: Two thousand seven; I'm sorry. I was trying to get this election over with.

MILES: Yes, I know the feeling.

Q: Dick, let's talk about—it was 1963. How long were you at Indiana?

MILES: I was there from '62 to '64.

Q: Well, let's talk about civil rights. How did you get into that?

MILES: My wife Sharon and I had become involved with the Quakers in Indiana. The Quakers are small in number but are particularly represented in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Indiana. Anyhow, I won't bore everyone with the story of how we got involved with the Quakers.

Q: Well, why don't you tell it? Because I'm trying to pick up a little social history, too.

MILES: Alright. Well, Sharon had been raised a Catholic, I had been raised a Protestant, either a Baptist or Methodist, depending on which church was near where we lived, and neither of us thought a whole lot about religion and I think, when we met, we were atheist in a sense. We didn't go around preaching about it, so to speak, but it just wasn't of any particular interest to us other than as an intellectual topic. Anyhow, Sharon worked in the Linguistics Department at Indiana University, which was also a very lively department at that time, and there was a Mennonite lady, Miriam Maust, who had worked with her previously in the English Department. And there was no Mennonite church in Bloomington so the Mausts went to the Quaker meeting. And Miriam, just to be friendly, kept inviting Sharon to go to the Quaker meeting with her and Sharon put her off for a while. But finally, to avoid being rude, she agreed that we would go, and we went. It was pleasant, but we didn't think much of it one way or the other. But they invited us back and in a couple of months we went back and then we went on our own and we became impressed with the people in the meeting. They were really quite decent people and people that you wanted to emulate in a way. That is what drew us into Quakerism; it is a church, it's a Protestant sect, but it's different from other churches. They don't have priests and bishops and so on, they don't proselytize, they don't ask you to join; you ask them to join. Well, we became interested in it. We took an evening course in Quakerism up at Earlham College in Indianapolis. Earlham College is a Quaker College in Richmond, Indiana, but they had an extension program in Indianapolis. And in the end we asked if we could join the Bloomington meeting, and even though I am not a pacifist, the meeting accepted us as members and we have considered ourselves Quakers ever since. Our daughter Elizabeth eventually attended a Quaker college, Haverford College, near Philadelphia.

The Quakers have a secular arm called the American Friends Service Committee, the AFSC. The AFSC goes way back to World War I, maybe earlier, and is the clone of the British Friends Service Committee. And I don't know if it was set up originally to help conscientious objectors perform some alternative service to the military or the nation and avoid direct military service but they did do a lot of that during World War I. Many of the medical personnel and the ambulance drivers were Quakers. Of course, some Quakers have fought in our wars. The famous Sergeant York was a Quaker as was President Nixon, who served in the Navy during World War II.

Quakers have been interested in what we would now call human rights issues since the beginning of Quakerism in England in the 17th century. And the AFSC began to get interested in the civil rights movement way back in the 1940s. In the early 1960s this interest began to intensify as the civil rights movement began to take hold of the public conscience. In 1963 there was a short, three week long voter registration program that the AFSC had organized in Greensboro, North Carolina, and I had exactly those few weeks free so I told Sharon I thought I would like to volunteer for this project in North Carolina just to see what was going on, and to participate in the civil rights movement, if only for a few weeks. And so I did. I went down to North Carolina and, even though the project was only three weeks long, this really was an emotional experience and a learning experience for me. Our little group also participated in the March on Washington and in general it was just a really rewarding three weeks.

When I came back to Bloomington I told Sharon that I thought that very significant things were happening in the South. I said that this was such a dramatic moment in American history that we would be remiss if we went straight into the Foreign Service out of college and that, instead, we should go spend about a year in the South. We knew that the next year, 1964, the AFSC was sponsoring another voter registration project in Orangeburg County, South Carolina. Now at that time Orangeburg was a rather tough county—still is, despite the presence of a black university there. Historically the county was known for lynching and so on in the past. And, despite this, I said to Sharon, "Why don't you go on that project in 1964 and see what you think?" We didn't have children then so we were pretty free to do what we wanted to do. We had no money to speak of but we didn't spend much money either. She thought that was a good idea and she did go and spend the whole summer in Orangeburg County. Her experience was even more emotionally rewarding than mine was, and she agreed that we should spend a year in the South before coming into the Foreign Service.

The people that had organized the project in South Carolina were very pleased with the work which the summer project had accomplished and this encouraged the local leaders to try to develop a full-time, state-wide, professional organization that would continue the work of the summer project but independent of the Quakers. The black community would pay for it by themselves basically, and the new organization would cover the whole state of South Carolina. They offered Sharon the job of Field Director of the new organization, the South Carolina Voter Education Project or SCVEP. There was some seed money. The Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project in Atlanta, Georgia, put up $5000; the Commission on Religion and Race of the United Presbyterian Church put up $5000

and the organization was to raise another $5000, for a total annual budget of $15,000. That was a laughable amount of money, but that was what they had. Anyhow, when push came to shove, the United Presbyterian Church representatives said they wouldn't provide the money if the organization was going to hire a white woman because they felt that it was too dangerous for a white woman and so, bless their hearts, the board members of the SCVEP asked her if she could recommend anyone. Clearly, they really liked her and had confidence in her judgment. And she said, "Well, you know, my husband is available. He has a master's degree in political science; he was on a civil rights project the year before; and he is a Marine veteran. He has been around, and why don't you take a look at him?" So they did and the board said, "Well, okay, we'll hire your husband, but on condition that he hire you as the secretary." Now, there were only two salaried people in the organization; everything else was more or less on a volunteer basis. And I said, "Well, it's just not right to have two white people as the only people that are earning any money from this organization (although it was $100 a week for me and $50 a week for Sharon). So I accept your condition but only for six months; after six months my wife goes on a volunteer basis. We'll hire a black secretary and if you don't like me by then, so be it." Anyhow, it worked out and instead of staying one year we stayed almost three years. The work was incredibly rewarding. I think we did accomplish a lot and we certainly learned a lot. It was a great honor to have been allowed to play such a role at that dramatic moment in our history. And then we slid into the Foreign Service just under the wire because at that time, you remember, the State Department requirement was you had to be under 31 when you came in and I came in when I was 30. Phil Wilcox and I were both 30 and we were the oldest members of our A-100 Class.

Q: Okay, let's talk about—what is the name of the county?

MILES: Well, the project that Sharon went on was in Orangeburg County, South Carolina, but my work was statewide. We lived and worked in the state capital, Columbia, but I spent an enormous amount of time on the road, going from one place to another, all over the state. I burned out three used cars during my time in South Carolina.

Q: Tell me about South Carolina. You know, as a political officer, what were you seeing there? Who was doing what to whom?

MILES: It was a great finishing school for practical politics and political work. The most influential black person in the state was the late Reverend I. D. Newman, of the United Methodist Church. He was the Field Director of the South Carolina NAACP. He was an excellent mentor and I spent a lot of time in his company. South Carolina is such a state, with Columbia right in the geographic middle of it, that you could almost always go where you were going, do what you were doing, and still come back and sleep at home at night. But this meant spending a lot of time on the road, and usually I'd go alone but often I'd go with Reverend Newman in his car, just the two of us. We'd spend two or three hours driving to a place and then do a meeting or a rally or raise money or whatever it was we were doing and then two or three hours back. So it was a lot of one-on-one time and we were good company for each other. He was older than I was and had a lifetime of

experience growing up and working in South Carolina. He liked to talk and I liked to listen and I really learned a lot from him.

Q: Who was the head of it?

MILES: The head of the SCVEP? That was Dr. Charles Thomas, a professor at Orangeburg College, an all-black college. Dr. Thomas chaired the board meetings of the SCVEP but, otherwise I didn't really work with him on a day to day basis. I worked more closely with Reverend Newman. Newman was and still is something of a legend in South Carolina. He led the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP through the turbulent years of the 1960s and he became the first black person elected to the South Carolina Senate since Reconstruction. A very intelligent and decent man, but not without his faults. Well, we all have faults. He was a bit devious, almost Machiavellian, in some ways. Black leaders had to have great political skills just to survive, let alone to accomplish their goals. This was true even though there were virtually no black elected officials in South Carolina while I was there. So someone in I. D. Newman's position almost had to be somewhat manipulative and sometimes disingenuous. Nonetheless, I learned a tremendous amount from him. These lessons served me well at the time and they have continued to serve me well in my Foreign Service career.

There were other organizations active in South Carolina as well. There was SCLC, Dr. King's organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. There was a CORE representative there. The leaders of these organizations, well, if Reverend Newman was, on a scale of one to 10, about a nine, these other guys were, you know, twos and threes. I mean, they didn't compare really, not in terms of state-wide reputation or in terms of talent and ability. SNCC was not active in South Carolina although Sharon and I hosted a SNCC activist, John Love, for several months. John had been injured during the events in Selma and needed time to recuperate.

And then there were many local leaders. Many of the local leaders in the black community were very dedicated and courageous people. Sharon and I loved Modjeska Simkins, an older and fairly radical black lady in Columbia. While she didn't want to subordinate herself or her followers to any other organization, she was supportive in many ways and Sharon and I learned a great deal from her about the state and its political leaders both white and black. I have very fond memories of Dorothy Franklin, a courageous leader in benighted McCormick County, over on the Georgia border. Or Hope Williams, a poor sharecropper in even more benighted Calhoun County, Victoria De Lee in Dorchester County, Alex Alford, who sold boiled peanuts to the pulp mill workers over in Georgetown County, Billie Fleming in Manning, Bob Palmer in Sumter. I could go on and on. There were some real heroes in those days, many of whom have faded from the pages of history, but they helped write some of those pages all the same. I really ought to write a book about those times and put these names down in print while there's still time.

We had a board of directors for the VEP, all black, made up of the black bourgeoisie. There was a couple of black lawyers, Matthew Perry and Ernest Finney, both of whom became federal judges later—years, decades later: a couple of black funeral home

directors, several black teachers, a couple of black ministers—maybe 13 or 14 people in all. Representatives of CORE and SCLC were on the board, as was a representative of the mostly white liberal organization, the South Carolina Council on Human Relations. The board met monthly. We tried to pay mileage money, but the board members received no stipend. I was responsible to the board, of course, and, in our meetings, we'd go over what had been accomplished during the previous month and make plans for the future. And then we continued to get seed money from the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project in Atlanta and I sent them monthly reports, not very religiously, I'll admit but, on the other hand, they never increased the money either—it remained $5000 a year for each of the three years I was there. The VEP in Atlanta was directed first by the late Wiley Branton, who later became a high official in the Department of Justice and Dean of the School of Law at Howard University, and then by Vernon Jordan, who is off the charts in terms of his own accomplishments. Both of these men were tremendously supportive of our work in South Carolina. Unfortunately Wiley died unexpectedly a few years later, but I still talk to Vernon from time to time.

The United Presbyterian Church felt we were doing well raising our own money so, after the first year, they stopped their subsidy. We tried to raise money not only in South Carolina but also in New York and places like that, but frankly it was difficult to get New Yorkers or others interested in something as undramatic as what was happening down in South Carolina. The wealthy people I talked to on a couple of fundraising trips up North didn't mind giving money to the big national organizations but they were uneasy giving money to us. They didn't know us, and I think they didn't quite trust us, to tell the truth. So the money we spent trying to lobby a few wealthy people up in New York was money wasted as far as I was concerned.

Q: How did these various organizations, the Southern Leadership Conference, other organizations, work together? Or was this a problem?

MILES: Well, again, as part of this preparation for diplomatic life, you know, they worked on two levels. On one level it was sweetness and light: "Let's all pull together for the good of the people." And on the other level they were quite ready to slice each other's throats, because they were competing for funds from the same pool of rather poor black people and a handful of well-off black people and a very few white Southern liberals. There was only so much money to go around. And while these amounts of money that I mentioned don't sound like much, remember this was 40 years ago and those small sums went further than now. So, yes, there was always a rivalry. And then the national organizations were also jealous of each other and that was echoed on the lower levels. So Dr. King's outfit, for example, did not really like other organizations helping out; they wanted to do things themselves. The CORE representatives were relatively aloof. I personally brought the representatives of SCLC and CORE onto the board of directors of the SCVEP—and what a fuss that was! Without ever saying so directly, Reverend. Newman was very much opposed to that. Frankly, I even had trouble with the AFSC at one point. The AFSC had a young white guy in Beaufort County down on the Atlantic coast and a young white couple in another little town in the Carolina low country. Just being friendly, and, after all, both Sharon and I had an AFSC background. I went down

there several times and met with these folks and they told me later that the regional AFSC people had told them to stay away from me and the VEP because we were too political. They wanted to keep their skirts totally clean. So there were constant difficulties and it required a certain amount of effort to keep everybody under the same tent. We were successful in that, but as we became successful and we began to develop a certain political and social weight within the black community itself, an interesting phenomenon came up which I have seen afterward in the Foreign Service. We were created as an umbrella organization to encompass all these organizations and help them do what they wanted to do. After a while, however, people began to look upon us as simply another civil rights organization and they wanted to create a kind of super-umbrella organization over us and the other organizations. We had to resist that because that would have destroyed our whole raison d'être.

Q: What were you trying to accomplish?

MILES: Well, there were several goals. The primary goal was to increase the number of registered black voters and that involved activity on several levels. Lobbying to change the South Carolina electoral code, which was a very antique code and it was designed, really, to discriminate against blacks. There is an interesting side story about that that I will tell you in a minute. Helping the black leaders themselves to organize voter registration campaigns and then to organize get-out-the-vote campaigns. Helping the black political leaders do some effective lobbying higher up in Washington and in New York for adoption of the Federal Voting Rights Act and sending the federal marshals into South Carolina. And also getting some get-out-the-vote money for South Carolina from the AFL-CIO COPE [Committee on Political Education] organization. So all these things were all part of the same pie but they were, well, it was like a recipe for pie, it's a combination of all the different ingredients that went in there.

Q: During these three years you were there, what was the cumulative effect of, you know, not just of what you were doing but what the whole movement was doing?

MILES: Well, of course the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act were both passed in successive years and that did change the complexion of things in South Carolina. Legal segregation was outlawed and it was now easier to register black voters and indigent white voters, too, although that was not a problem that I dealt with, but they also were sometimes discriminated against. And the number of registered black voters went up considerably. I don't have the statistics here but we kept statistics; in fact, we were about the only ones who had reliable statistics. We shared these figures with the Southern Regional Council's VEP in Atlanta.

Q: Let's talk about the opposition, the Southern white establishment. One, was this a dangerous atmosphere and, two, just what were they doing during this time down there?

MILES: It was not as dangerous as in some other Southern states. The South Carolina establishment wanted to keep a lid on violence and so while there had been one incident before I arrived there in which a bus carrying so-called Freedom Riders was burned and

the people on it had to get out and flee, there were no other significant efforts against us in the violent sense. I can remember only one exception to that statement which I will talk about in a minute.

There were white citizens' councils that had sprung up all over the South, and including in South Carolina—kind of like a semi-civilized Ku Klux Klan. They would in various ways try to slow down the registration of black voters: discourage black voters from coming to the polls once they were registered and then, not necessarily as an organization, but some of the members and even just some ornery individuals would apply the economic pressure that they had against individual blacks who they felt either were just simply trying to register to vote or were activists in the community and helping in the programs that we were trying to advance. There were still a lot of sharecroppers in South Carolina and sharecropping is a pretty precarious existence. You live on someone else's land—basically it's almost like being a serf—and you're generally indebted to the landowner for the next crop to come and you pay your expenses out of that crop. So a sharecropper can get into economic difficulties real fast. I'm not sure exactly what protection the laws might have given you at that time, but basically you're persistently in debt to the fellow who owns the land and the house in which you are living. You have, maybe, five or six or seven kids or more. You are certainly going to be inhibited in doing anything which your landowner doesn't want you to do. I've known people who have been thrown out of their house and off their land because of their political activities. On the other hand, I've known others who resisted that pressure and in the end the white owners decided they didn't want to go that far and they just allowed the activities to continue.

I knew one case involving a real American hero. Her name was Victoria DeLee, living in Dorchester County. She had children, quite a few children, ten as I recall, and her husband I guess either had died or had just gone away. And for some reason she became a real target. She was a community activist and she had become a target for some of the racists around, probably some of the young people who were not always under the control of the older types. And so there was shooting into her house on various occasions, usually with a rifle or a shotgun, sometimes a pistol—you could tell by the sound, she said, what they were shooting. I saw the bullet holes myself. Anyhow, at some point her house was burnt down. I've got pictures of it. We published a little newsletter every couple of weeks—*Carolina Contrast*, we called it—and I had someone go down to take pictures of the family sitting on the steps. All you could see were the steps where the house had been, the chimney over where the chimney was, and everything else was total ashes. They destroyed that house right down to the ground. And she continued her activities.

But the white establishment itself was really opposed to that kind of a thing and I did develop a good working relationship with the head of the State Law Enforcement Division or SLED. It's kind of like a state FBI.

Now we didn't engage in a whole lot of demonstrations—a few, but not many. My job was almost technical in a way. I was just there to help people organize and to show them

the best way to accomplish what they were trying to accomplish, and to help the black leadership to lobby effectively and to use their growing political strength. Nonetheless, there would sometimes be demonstrations or whatever and I almost always informed the head of the State Law Enforcement Division privately that there would be a demonstration in such and such a town at such and such a place at such and such a time and he would have plainclothes policemen there to kind of keep an eye on things and keep violence down. At the same time, the SLED agents would come around to our meetings and take down the license numbers of the cars and probably tap some telephones and whatnot while they were at it. There were efforts by various white people and organizations those days, sometimes condoned, sometimes not condoned, to just keep their bosses, let's say, the white establishment, knowledgeable about what we were doing.

I'll give you an example. When we first moved to South Carolina, we lived in the black community in Columbia. I had sent all of my books to myself from Indiana University. They included books on communism and Marxism, because that is what I had been studying back at the university. Well, they didn't come and they didn't come, and I was informed one day by Modjeska Simkins that a black worker in the main post office had told her that the post office officials were waiting for me to ask where those books were because they wanted me to come down to the post office and ask for them and then they were going to try to interrogate me about why I had these books on Marxism-Leninism and all that. So I just went to the local FBI office and said, "I understand that the Post Office is holding my mail and I'd appreciate it if you'd tell them to stop screwing around and deliver it." The FBI agent said he knew nothing about it and this was not really their jurisdiction but he thanked me for the information. I got my books the next day. Now, I admit it was pretty damn stupid to have mailed books like that to myself but, of course, I was still learning how democracy works—or doesn't work. Like I said, good preparation for the Foreign Service.

Q: Did you find a sort of white community connection there or was it a bunch of—?

MILES: Not a lot. There were a couple of people. In fact, I was just down at the University of South Carolina to give a few lectures and I met with a couple of old friends, white people, from those days. Hayes Mizell and a young man, Peter Lee, helped out as did Howard Levy, an Army Captain at Fort Jackson, who later got into real trouble with the Army and spent two years at Ft. Leavenworth for his anti-Vietnam activities. There was a South Carolina Council on Human Relations, under the leadership of a very capable white woman named Alice Spearman. She had been President of that organization for eons. And I'd go over and talk to them once in a while. They were interested in what we were doing and they wanted to be supportive. Don Fowler, at the University of South Carolina, invited me to speak to his students once or twice and he and I became good friends. I received quiet support from a fairly prominent state legislator and lawyer named Isadore Lourie. We met sometimes to exchange views and I always valued his advice. He had to be a bit cautious in his public remarks because he was Jewish.

To tell the truth, there was not a lot for the white folks to do. There were so few white liberals, hardly a critical mass, and our problem was not with them; our problem was with the South Carolina state legislature, with the electoral code or, on a county by county basis, with individual county officials who themselves were reluctant to allow blacks to register and discouraged their coming out. Conditions varied, county by county. South Carolina had almost a feudal political system in which the county senator, the county's senior representative in the State legislature, was really the boss of the county. And if he had a very conservative or a reactionary attitude, then you had trouble. In some cases he might have a liberal attitude, in which case you were home free. He might be neutral but have a kind of a patronizing attitude where, if he thought that these new voters might be going to vote for him or people he wanted to support, he would be in favor of black voter registration. I mean, it was a mixed picture; it was not—if you will—it was not a black and white situation of total opposition to black voting. Indeed, when I went there, maybe slightly less than one-third of the eligible black voters across the state were already registered to vote. When I left it was, I can't recall the exact percentage, but it was more like 45 to 50 percent—so a considerable increase. But the state-wide numbers hid the fact that in some counties the situation was terrible while in other counties there was hardly a problem at all.

Q: Did you run into the caricature of the redneck sheriff?

MILES: Only a couple of times. Most of my work was pretty much on the quiet, and a lot of it was at night because, you know, we had to meet with working people and they couldn't meet during the day; they were busy trying to earn a living. So I was not very visible and didn't really try to stick out very much but sometimes this would happen. I remember I was sitting on a fence near the courthouse in Barnwell County, which is where the Speaker of the South Carolina state legislature held sway. Barnwell was a very conservative county, and I was sitting there with a couple of blacks on each side of me, just watching the line of voters who were going in—this was a culmination of a registration campaign—trying to go in to the registrar's office to register to vote. A deputy sheriff, armed with a very big pistol, came up, stood right in my face and said something really childish, like, "What color of man are you?" And I said, "Well, I'm white." "So what are you doing here with these nigras?" That was a term for African-Americans which whites usually tried to use when they were trying not to be terribly offensive. And I said, "Well, I'm just sitting here watching these people going to try to register to vote." And he said, "We know how to deal with people like you and if this wasn't daylight, I might show you something you wouldn't like." And then he walked around behind me and I just sat there, I didn't know what to do exactly. I wasn't going to take off running—what is the sense of that, I thought—but I was worried. I thought, well, this might be a bullet in the back; this guy might be so worked up that it would happen. Luckily, he finally went away.

And then another time I was driving back to Columbia from another particularly nasty county, McCormick County, over near the Georgia line. The county was about half black and half white. In this county, according to the official statistics, there were more white people registered than actually lived there while only about five percent of the black

population was registered. It was a very tough county. I was driving back from that county late one night, around midnight probably, and I saw this little red light blinking in my rear view mirror. And I was driving through an area of the swamps, nothing at all on either side of the road except these swamps. I thought, this is going to be trouble. Anyhow, I pulled over and the officer said, "Well, what are you doing out here?" And I said, "I've been at a meeting over in town and I'm going home," and he said, "Yes, I know you've been at that meeting, I know what you're doing." And then he said, "You know, I'm going to have to ground you." And I thought—uh, permanently? I didn't say that but only thought it. He said, "Yes, your left tail light is out," or something like that. I said, "Well, there is nothing much I can do about it right now, this is a deserted road. So can I drive on home and get it fixed tomorrow or go to the next service station?" He said, "No. No, I'm grounding you. You're just going to have to stay here." Well, I didn't know what to make of that. Was he going to go back and tell some of his tougher friends where I was or what? One thing I knew—I didn't want to end up in that swamp. So I waited until his tail light had disappeared back off in the distance and then I took off as fast as I could for Columbia and I never heard anything more about it.

I never got arrested in South Carolina but Sharon did. This was when she was on the AFSC's Orangeburg project. She and another volunteer had parked on the side of a country road and were off in a cotton field talking to a group of black workers about registering to vote. A local sheriff's deputy arrested the ladies for parking with their car tire touching the pavement and hauled them into the local magistrate's office—which was his little country store. The magistrate locked them in a broom closet while he tried to figure out what to do. They were scared, for sure but finally they were allowed a phone call and Sharon got hold of Matthew Perry who had agreed to provide necessary legal advice to the project and, after a couple of hours, they were released. While the charges were dropped, that arrest record is still there and Sharon is very proud of it.

But these were isolated incidents. The only time I really worried, and, unfortunately, it was about three or four times a week, was when I finally came home at night. In Columbia we lived in a black neighborhood in a small frame building which had about six apartments in it, all black families except for us. And you parked in a lot which was right near the building and had some lights on it and then you walked around the building in the total darkness and then in the front door and up to our apartment on the second floor. I always felt as I walked from my car—and I'd be getting in about 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning—as I walked from my car up into that area of darkness, I always felt that I might get a bullet in the back, like Vernon Jordan did a few years later. Now I'm not Catholic but I mentally crossed myself when I crossed that little patch of illuminated parking lot going into the darkness. In that case the darkness was good because I would be less of a target. Nobody had night vision devices in those days. And I suppose I did that several times a week for three years. It's a wonder I never developed an ulcer, although Sharon did. Anyhow, nothing happened, and in fact nothing happened to any of the civil rights leaders in South Carolina at that time or even to our own activists, with the exception of those cases I mentioned to you of the woman's house being burned down or the occasional sharecropper forced out of his house. Those were exceptions to the white

establishment's general rule, which was to keep a lid on things and to let us do things in our own way as long as we were law abiding and not inciting violence ourselves.

Maybe this is an appropriate time to tell a little story. Our son Richard was born in the Catholic hospital in Columbia, and Sharon and he were in the white ward even though the hospital was supposed to have been desegregated at that time. All the nurses and doctors and hospital administrators were white. No black people in sight. The day came for them to go home and when I stopped at the desk in the lobby, I was told that I had to pay $200 for the hospital costs. I asked the lady to bill me. She said, "No, we can't be sure you'll pay it. You have to pay it now." I said, "Well, I don't have that much right now. Can't you bill me?" Remember, I only made a hundred dollars a week and sometimes I was late getting that. I didn't have a dime of savings. It never occurred to me that you had to pay cash in advance for babies in South Carolina. Anyhow, she was adamant. I finally said, "Well, you can't just keep them here." And she said, "We can and we will!" So I went back across town and asked Reverend Newman of the NAACP if he would loan me $200 to bail my wife and new baby out of the white hospital. He immediately wrote me out a check. Now, the NAACP had its account in a black bank and their checks had a big engraving of the black patriarch who had founded the bank. So, when I went back and handed that check to the administrator at the hospital, I got a look that would kill a horse. First time a white baby had ever been bought by the South Carolina NAACP, I'm sure of that! Isn't that a good story?

Q: Did national politics play much of a role? I'm thinking probably of Strom Thurmond, at one point the strict segregationist senator, Dixiecrat, and all that.

MILES: Again, South Carolina is a different kind of a place. When Sharon and I had been in South Carolina only a few months we decided to go up to Washington. We were going to attend Lyndon Johnson's inauguration or something, I don't remember what it was. Anyhow, we decided we would call on Senator Thurmond. And so we did and his staff couldn't believe it. They were almost literally peering around the corners of the doors to see what we looked like—you know, were we wild eyed and wild haired hippies or whatever. But Strom himself was actually very gracious. We told him what we were doing in South Carolina and he made it clear that he knew exactly what we were doing and he just said, "As long as you stay within the law, we want to encourage our Negro voters, so your program sounds fine." And I never had any trouble with Strom Thurmond. In fact later when these voters began to pile up in the numbers and the handwriting was on the wall for the old system, he hired a black person on his staff before the Democratic senator did. So he began to change his ways. And of course we know now that all this time he had a black daughter as well. This was common knowledge in South Carolina but no one ever talked about it publicly. Now it has come out publicly.

When Senator Olin Johnston died—who had been a stalwart on the Democratic side of the Senate for years and years, decades actually—when he died there was a, I don't remember if it was a special election or the next general election, I'm not quite sure how it worked out, but in November of 1966, just before I left to join the Foreign Service,

there was an election to replace him in the Senate. Former Governor Hollings was the Democratic Party candidate. And while we were technically a non-partisan organization, it was clear that 98 or 99 per cent of the black voters in South Carolina were Democratic. So there was a great effort on the part of the Hollings campaign people to get out all of that vote that was possible because there was very strong Republican opposition. The Republican Party was increasingly powerful in the state. This was the time of the development of the "new" Republican Party in the South, which had its hidden agenda of being really a pro-white, anti-black party. This was later popularized as the "Southern strategy" of the Republican Party. Harry Dent, of South Carolina, was one of the people who thought this up and one of his protégés was Lee Atwater, a nasty piece of work, who, happily for me, was not yet involved in serious politics in South Carolina during the time I was there. And so that Senate race in November, 1966, was very close. The leaders of the various black organizations did talk to Hollings and to his people and we did try to get out the best vote we could. In short, we helped to put Hollings in the Congress where he stayed for six terms. The black vote was decisive in that election. And years later I worked with Senator Hollings on an exchange that the American Political Science Association sponsors, so it kind of went around full circle.

Speaking of the South Carolina Republican Party reminds me of an interesting incident. A committee of the state legislature was going to hold hearings on the possible revision of the state electoral code. I asked to appear and testify and I found out that Lonnie Belt, a northern lady who was active in the state Republican Party was also going to testify. So I met her and suggested that we work together on our separate presentations so we would not contradict each other and so on. We did that and I thought that we both made some effective points. Well, she told me afterward that the state Republican leadership was not at all happy that she had worked with me in this way and they told her never to repeat that kind of cooperation. Well, all part of the learning process.

Q: Well then, fresh things we didn't really cover. You were at the University of Indiana from when to when?

MILES: Sixty-two to sixty-four.

Q: And what were you studying?

MILES: My major was government, or political science, and with a specialization in Soviet law. I wrote what amounts to a dissertation on Soviet law. But my real work was in the Russian and East European Institute. I could have gotten a master's degree from Indiana in one year but in order to get the certificate from the Russian and East European Institute I really had to stay two years.

Q: What was the state of political science at Indiana University at that time? You understand why I'm asking you—because political science has turned terribly quantitative and all that.

MILES: This is a good question. It was the beginning of that phase and, even in the field of Soviet studies, some of the people were trying hard to figure out how to use computers to better analyze what had already happened in the Soviet Union and to better predict the future. I remember one big study that someone was doing in looking at the biographic information available on Communist Party first secretaries and trying to put that into the computer and draw conclusions about who might reasonably become Communist Party first secretaries in the future. And at that time you will recall—this would have been the mid-1960s, early 1960s—there was no such thing as a personal computer. Universities had computers but they were as big as a small house and they were kept in special rooms which were air conditioned because all those vacuum tubes and moving parts got very hot. The information was on large reel-to-reel tapes. Access time was strictly limited and you would be very lucky if you had access for half an hour a week, so you had to manage your material carefully. These were the days of the IBM punch cards where a lot of computer work involved sifting information using these stupid punch cards. And I just felt that whole thing was nonsense as applied to anything I was interested in and I had nothing whatsoever to do with it. But, still, it was the beginning of the computer age and there was a certain pressure on us—maybe it was not so much pressure on us as encouragement—to try to go that route if we felt we could use it in our work. I was interested in it intellectually but not to the extent of trying to use it in my work.

Q: Did you feel there was any thrust to Russian-Soviet studies? Because I can think of two conflicting things: one, the prevalent anti-communist mind set and, two, the application of Marxist theories. Now, was that playing itself out at Indiana?

MILES: As for anti-communism, when I was at Berkeley I became interested in what was then the Christian, anti-communist right, and I used to listen to some of the radio programs, got some of their material by mail, attended some of their rallies and wrote some papers about it for my political science classes. I just felt it was kind of fascinating. Repellent but fascinating. And this "fear and loathing" goes back into American history, back into the 1920s and '30s and you can even take it on back to the "Know Nothings" movement in the 19th century; there is that strain of wackiness in American politics. I was very pleased when I learned later that one of the fellows that I had paid special attention to, Reverend Billy James Hargis, who had founded something called the Christian Crusade, which was built entirely on an anti-communist basis—that was his whole raison d'être—had lost his whole church and his little university—so-called—which he had founded, when it turned out that he had had sexual relations with several students including not just the bride of a couple that he had married in his church but also the groom. I thought that was a better scandal than anything anyone could have imagined.

Q: One doesn't forget these scandals, particularly those where the—

MILES: Yes.

Q: —fellow is a Bible-thumping, holier-than-thou kind of a person.

MILES: Yes. Well, this fellow, Hargis, was really over the top. And there were others, too. I remember getting one publication for a while that was just awful. It was called *The Cross and the Flag*, something like that, put out by a particularly vicious fellow named Gerald L. K. Smith. The publication was almost Nazi-like in its anti-communist, anti-Jewish, anti-black intensity and fervor, you know; really pretty awful stuff. So I studied this peculiarly American form of anti-communism and I was quite interested in that, really, but then I got more involved in studying Russian and Russia and the Soviet Union in general. I didn't have time to keep up with these right wing radicals, interesting as they were.

At that time, the Soviet Union was the biggest threat to the United States and I was really interested in all aspects of what had gone into the making of the Soviet Union—history, economics, literature, everything. And as my studies became more and more specialized I went deeper into Russian and Soviet law and I decided to do what amounted to my dissertation work on what I called extra-legal means of social control. Khrushchev had resuscitated an institution from the Lenin period called comrades' courts where, in order to improve worker discipline, try to lower the rate of alcoholism, try to prevent wife beating and violence, domestic violence, and even to protect the ecology, you could be hauled in by your comrades, so-called, if you were accused of any of these things—even of destroying bushes or trees. I mean, it was kind of weird—as though the law was not enough, you had to go after some poor drunk to try to get him to mend his ways by public scorn and ridicule. Some of these sessions were even televised—kind of an early communist version of Judge Judy.

Actually this reminds me a bit of the home owners' association in the community where I live now. They have 57 pages of dos and don'ts for the happy homeowners to live by. Anyhow I was quite interested in all that, and I wrote my dissertation on it—well, technically not a dissertation, but dissertation-like.

Q: Well then, off you go to Washington in 1960—?

MILES: Yes, January of 1967. I should mention a graduate seminar I took at the University of South Carolina at that time. Ellis Briggs came down; he had retired from the Foreign Service, one of our well-known ambassadors, and he was teaching an undergraduate class and a graduate seminar and I got permission to take the seminar. He was really down there to shoot birds; he was not much interested in South Carolina as such but the University gave him a nice stipend, a sinecure, and allowed him time to shoot and kill small animals. I really liked him; he was a real curmudgeon. I remember we used to get into arguments about why was I—who did I think I was—to come down to peaceful South Carolina and agitate among these black citizens who were very happy with their lot. And I said, "Well, Ambassador, you have been Ambassador in Greece when we had the colonels there; you were Ambassador to the Dominican Republic when we intervened; you were Ambassador in Czechoslovakia; you were Ambassador in Korea. I mean, come on, you have intervened." He said, "Yes, yes, but those were foreigners." Well, sorry. I think we all have an obligation to do what we can to make life

better wherever and whenever we can. Of course, we are limited by circumstances. We all know that what might work in British India wouldn't work in Nazi Germany.

By the way, Ambassador Briggs wrote really good memoirs. I just read the last of his several books.

Q: Well then, do you recall any of the questions that you were asked in the oral exam?

MILES: Let me back up a little. There is a funny anecdote in connection with the written exam. I mentioned that I had to take it again because, at that time, your passing score was only valid for one year and I had been down in South Carolina for almost three years. I took the exam at the University of South Carolina. It was a busy time for me and since I did most of my work at night, I was dead tired when I took the exam. And I doubt that I was dressed in a very collegiate way. Most of the other people taking the exam were rather preppy looking and I expect they wondered who I was because I looked like I didn't belong in that crowd. I tended to finish the various sections faster than the others did and when I did that, I would lay my head down on my arm and go to sleep. Well, I'm sure that raised eyebrows and probably a few snickers. Anyhow, I believe that only two of us passed that exam: a fellow who had also been in Ambassador Briggs' seminar, Scott Hallford, and me. And my score, which was not a high score, was two points higher than the score I had made on the previous exam.

Now, the oral exam. Yes, I remember quite a few of the questions. This was the old exam, of course, and the panel consisted of three examiners. It was a combination of Foreign Service Officers and laymen. One guy was from the labor movement, I think. I'm sure that my being in the civil rights movement helped a lot because this was 1966 and the panel was quite interested in it; they didn't know much about it, and here I was on the inside with all these tales of adventure and everything, so we spent a lot of time talking about that. But then they did finally get around to some of the more traditional questions. I can remember one. They said, "You were in Japan when you were in the military service." Well, I was a young Marine guard on a ship, I mean it hardly signified, but they said, "Let's assume you are with the Embassy in Japan and you have a new political appointee ambassador coming out and you are asked to present him with a paper showing the three most important aspects of U.S.-Japanese relations and what should be done with regard to each one of them." I thought that was a very good question, really, even though I didn't know much about Japan. In the exam at that time you had to show whether you had been reading the newspapers—there, I mentioned your newspapers—or not and you had to be able to organize your thoughts fairly logically and of course immediately—no time to screw around. Well, I got through the Japan question reasonably well. Another one was actually harder because it was assumed that I actually knew something about the subject when, in fact, I didn't. Defend the proposition, they said, that the Sino-Soviet split is just a plot to confuse and deceive the West and then attack that proposition. This is when I called on my study of logic back in Professor Wolin's classes at Berkeley. Logic will sometimes get you through when all else fails.

They were very curious about the books that I read. That went well, but then they also asked a lot of questions about economics, which I have never been very strong at. In those days they would tell you immediately whether you had passed or not. The chairman of the panel came out and said, well you passed and I would like to welcome you into the Foreign Service, but the panel did feel that you were holding back on your knowledge of economic affairs; that you must have known more than you were admitting that you knew. And I thought, Good Lord! I was giving you everything that I had.

Q: When they told me, when I passed, this is back in '55, they just said you're weak in economics and do something about it.

MILES: Yes, they recommended a couple of books.

Q: Samuelson, I guess.

MILES: Samuelson, exactly. Well, you can never know enough. But later in a Foreign Service career, you do learn that it all comes together at the top. I should have read Samuelson again before I went into that exam.

Q: Alright. Then you came in '57 was it?

MILES: Sixty-seven.

Q: Sixty-seven I meant, yes. What was your A-100, your basic officer course like? I mean, how was it constituted and how did you find the training?

MILES: Let me stop you one more time. I know this is rude, but I remember a funny story from my pre-hiring security interview. The security officer came down to Columbia to interview me. Again, it was a busy time—1966 was an election year and I didn't have a lot of spare time. The security officer phoned me and wanted me to go to his motel and be interviewed there. I said I didn't have time for that but that I would be happy to see him in the office of the VEP. He put up a fuss and so, in the end, I went to the motel. I was a bit naïve about this but then I realized during the interview that he was surreptitiously tape recording the interview. Why surreptitiously? I have no idea. Probably some DS requirement. Anyhow, there I was—Joe Freedom Fighter and probably with a little bit of an attitude. The security officer probably had his own personal opinion about whether or not I should be allowed to join the Foreign Service although he was very professional in his approach. Anyhow, he went down his list of questions and came to the one, "Have you ever had a security clearance before?" Now, he knew that I had been a Marine, but in those days, most enlisted Marines did not get security clearances, at least not during their first enlistment. He probably had his pencil ready to check the "No" box. Imagine his reaction when I told him, "Oh, yes. I had a Top Secret 'Q' clearance in the Marines." Now, the "Q" clearance is granted for access to special weapons. And I had it because of my guard duty on the *Lexington*. Well, that did take him aback and, as I recall, his demeanor became a little friendlier after that. The officer's name was Lou Kachulis and I later served with him at one of my overseas posts.

I remember that there were two of us young officers at that post who had been cleared by Lou. He told us both, "For God's sake, if you're going to screw up, please don't do it on my watch. I'd never be able to live it down."

The training was good. It was a big class. I think there were 60 or 70 of us in there because they needed a lot of people to go to Vietnam in those days, mostly in the CORDS [Civil Operations and Rural Development Support] program. And it had some women in it. If there were blacks in it I don't remember any of them, so there must not have been very many. Only a couple of people were older; Phil Wilcox and I were 30 and we were the oldest ones. Very few were married. And only a couple of PhDs. One guy had a law degree and didn't make it through the A-100 class. He took a job with a law firm in Washington and dropped out. Couldn't resist the chance to make some real money, I guess. I remember my entry-level salary—with a master's degree—was $8300. Just before I left South Carolina, Vernon Jordan, with the VEP in Atlanta, actually offered me $10,000 to come down and work for him. If I were black, I would have been tempted.

One interesting thing I remember from the A-100 course is that when you went to talk to the personnel counselors they would ask you where you wanted to be assigned. I said, "Well, I know that I can't go to the Soviet Union because you don't send first time officers out to the Soviet Union or the Soviet Bloc. So," I said, "if I can't go to Yugoslavia (which was kind of an exception to this rule), let me just tell you where I won't go. I won't go to Vietnam and I won't go to South Africa." I just didn't want to bother with either one for moral reasons. And they said, "Well, you can't do that. You can't say where you won't go. You just agreed you'd go wherever you are ordered to go and so you have to do that." And I said, "Well, no I don't. I could quit." And they said, "Quit? Quit? You just got in." And I said, "Well, you know, I hope that I don't get assigned to either of those places because if I'm ordered to go, I won't do it." And I said to Sharon, "Well, that may have torn the whole thing right there." And indeed, if I had gotten some hard-ass counselor, he probably would have put me down for Vietnam just to see what I would do. But in fact I got the opposite, I guess, and what happened was the gods smiled upon me again and I was sent to Norway when at least one-third or more of my class, if not 40 percent, went off to Vietnam and the others went all around the world, of course. But I went off to lovely Norway. Talk about pure, blind luck.

Q: You weren't faced with any great moral dilemma in going to Norway, I take it?

MILES: Not at all. No, not at all. Much later in my career, I made a pitch to be sent to Norway as Ambassador and was pretty much laughed out of the seventh floor official's office. We haven't had a career ambassador in Norway since the ice age.

Q: Okay. You were in Norway from '67 to—?

MILES: Sixty-nine. First tours were two years.

Q: Who was the Ambassador there?

MILES: Well, she was a career diplomat. Margaret Joy Tibbetts. She was a delight and a professional diplomat, one of the few, very few, that we have had in Norway. Almost always they are political appointees there. And she was just great. I just loved her, really. A wonderful role model. I still run my staff meetings on the Margaret Joy Tibbets model. Half an hour and we're all out of there.

Q: What was your job?

MILES: Consular work. In those days the junior officers basically did consular work for two years. There wasn't this rotation that they have nowadays.

Q: What was the situation in Norway at the time?

MILES: Well, Norway is a constitutional monarchy, of course, and it had a strange type of government that they practiced for years called minority government or something like that, in which the other parties, rather than build a coalition, allowed the labor party, the largest single party, to form the government and rule the country while the other parties had the ability to replace that government at any time. So the labor party was in power while I was there. And, of course, Norway was a staunch member of NATO. As the Norwegians used to say, "We were the last to join NATO and will be the last to leave it," and I expect that's true.

In my job, I didn't have a whole lot to do with what few political problems there were. I would attend the staff meetings on occasion and it seemed to me that there were no particular problems in our relationship with Norway. There would be tiny things like whether a proper license had been issued for a particular type of weapon that we were providing, which in a normal country would not even be a blip on the agenda of the country team. But in Norway the Embassy officers had nothing else to worry about so they fretted about that. There was a sort of a constant concern in Norway about social problems like alcoholism and problems of the elderly and that kind of thing, and there was a lot of anti-U.S. Vietnam policy sentiment in Norway, but all of us, from Margaret Joy Tibbetts on down, just sort of laid low on that issue. I certainly did. My visa clerk's husband was an American draft dodger but we just didn't talk about it. And so it was—since we weren't out lighting bonfires to support our policy in Vietnam, then the Norwegian public pretty much left us alone.

Q: What sort of visa work or what sort of consular work were you doing?

MILES: I did pretty much everything except immigrant visas. The first year, I ran the NIV, the non-immigrant visa, section. We were vastly overstaffed there. We had a consul, a deputy, a supervisory consul, an NIV officer, an IV [immigrant visa] officer and an American Citizens' Services officer. Can you believe it? And all that in a very friendly country of four million people.

Q: I was thinking, there probably wasn't—there was no such thing as a visa waiver regime at the time, but—

MILES: Well, we came close. We did a lot of visas by mail and we gave them for 10 years, multiple entry. And what I had to do—the only two things I did as the NIV officer—was to interview nannies who wanted to go to America, to be assured their job offer was legitimate, and to interview Norwegians who had been members of the Communist Party during the war and right after the war—most of them left the Party with the Hungarian events in '56—and to see whether or not they could qualify for a waiver of their ineligibility. But otherwise there was virtually nothing to do, really; the easiest and most boring job I ever had in my life—at least in my civilian life.

I met some interesting people that way because so many Norwegians had joined the Communist Party in the 1940s. The Party had been very strong in the resistance to the Germans, and I can remember meeting a fellow who was one of the managers or whatever you call it up at the big steel mill in Kirkenes at the very northern end of Norway, way above the Arctic Circle and not too far from the Soviet border. He had been a member of the Party during the War. And in early May, 1969, Sharon and I and my aunt Beryl who had come over to visit, took a boat trip all the way up the coast of Norway above the Arctic Circle to this little town and then back again, and this fellow was so kind. When I had gotten the ineligibility waiver for him, he had said that if I ever needed or wanted anything in Kirkenes to let him know. At that time I had no intention of ever going to Kirkenes, which is pretty much at the end of the earth. Anyhow, I sent him a telex saying I'd be coming and unfortunately I'd be arriving at 4 o'clock in the morning or something like that. Happily it was the Midnight Sun season so it didn't matter very much. I asked him if he would like to have breakfast with us on the ship, whatever he wanted to do. Well, what happened was so nice and it impressed the hell out of the other passengers. He met us at the dock with thermoses of tea and coffee and a basket full of sandwiches and whatnot that his wife had fixed and then he whisked us off to the steel mill, gave us hard hats, took us all through the steel mill. And then I said I'd really like to see the Soviet border. You know, this was the closest I had ever been to the Soviet Union which I'd studied for so many years, and so he said, "Okay, let's do that." So we drove off and I still have a picture of myself with a little sign in Norwegian saying "Warning. Soviet Border." Really neat. Then he drove us back to the ship where we regaled the other passengers with the tales of our adventures.

Q: Were the Norwegians easy to get to know or was it sort of a standoffish group? How did you find it?

MILES: Like many people, they have their own characteristics. Sharon and I felt very comfortable with them and I think they felt comfortable with us because we were a little bit Norwegian-like in our own approach. Neither of us is an extrovert, really. We are a little bit reserved ourselves. We were and still are very family oriented and this is exactly how Norwegians are, so we didn't push them and they didn't push us and therefore we had some good friends, but slowly. I mean, the best thing would be to stay there four years or five years and then you might be able to get somewhere. But we had a few friends and we had some very happy times hiking, boating and cross-country skiing. We would rent a mountain hut for the winter from a farmer and would have meals with the

farm family and it would just be us, nobody else. I spoke Norwegian. I didn't learn it at FSI [Foreign Service Institute], but I learned it on the job doing consular work. Norwegian is very easy for English speakers and so, after a year or so, our Norwegian was pretty good. And we usually had our little son, Richard, along. By that time he was two or three and spoke perfect Norwegian thanks to his "*barnehagen*" or kindergarten, and so all in all we just had a hell of a time. Our daughter, Elizabeth, was born in Oslo in March 1969 so we have some strong, emotional ties to Norway, which we feel to this day.

Q: How did you find Embassy life?

MILES: We didn't have much to do with it. As I learned more about Embassy life later, I realized that in Norway, we had opted out of Embassy life. Remember, we had just come out of the civil rights movement. We were still a little bit strung out. We really just relished having a quiet family life and enjoying our son Richard who was then—he had just had his second birthday by the time we got to Norway, so he was between two and four years old. The last year of our tour was taken up with Sharon's pregnancy and the birth of our daughter Elizabeth.

Oslo was a very sleepy post but we did manage to wake it up at least once. I remember the first "diplomatic" dinner we gave in Oslo. We lived in a beautiful, traditional Norwegian log house with grass and flowers growing on the roof—like something out of *Heidi*. Maybe the prettiest house we ever had in the Foreign Service. Well, halfway through the meal, Sharon smelled something burning. She thought the coffee had overflowed. When she went out of the dining room, she discovered that the whole front of the house was on fire. She was very calm—well, sort of calm. She came back into the dining room and said, pretty loud, "The goddam house is on fire!" Everyone leaped into action, calling the fire department, rescuing our son, who was sleeping upstairs, getting everyone out of the house. One of the guests was injured slightly by falling glass as I jumped out of the upstairs window with our son. When the firemen had finally put out the fire, we huddled around the fireplace drinking brandy as the snow fell through the half-burned away roof. The fire was caused by faulty wiring and the damage was repaired amazingly quickly. Anyhow, after that, everyone in Oslo wanted to be invited to our house, hoping that something equally exciting would happen to them. It was the talk of the diplomatic community for that whole winter.

I can't think of a better place to raise a child on the face of this earth than Norway. It's probably changed. After all, this was forty years ago. But in those days, the mothers would wrap the babies in warm clothes and blankets and take them along shopping—in a very well built pram in the summer or in a special kind of a sled called a "*spark*" in the winter. When the mother went into a shop, she'd leave the baby outside in the pram or the *spark*. If the baby started crying, the nearest passerby would move the pram or *spark* back and forth until the baby went back to sleep. No one even thought of kidnapping. Absolutely unthinkable! Those were the days—halcyon days!

I had a good friend in the Consular Section who had a sailboat and he encouraged me to buy a small boat. I decided to buy a "*snekke*", an inboard, wooden motorboat of a

Norwegian type, and so we'd go down to the small-boat docks often, where we got to know some of the people there pretty well, too. In other words, if you immerse yourself in Norwegian life, there's no problem—they sort of accept you. I loved that boat. It was an old one and I paid $200 for it. The tool kit that came with the boat was also old and the guy who sold the boat to me said, "I stole this from a German truck during the war and you can have it." I wish I had kept that tool kit. I can remember that old boat breaking down once out on the Oslo Fjord and being towed back by a Norwegian family in their boat. I expect they wondered what in the world these American diplomats were doing out in an antique *snekke*. You know, I just found Norwegians very friendly, very warm, and so pro-American it was almost painful. But again, you have to approach them on their terms. They don't like flamboyance unless they are drunk. If they do get drunk, then watch out! They can be as flamboyant as anybody. But ordinarily they are a quiet people and just prefer to let things take their course. We Americans could learn a lot from them. Of course, Norwegian-Americans already know all this.

Q: Sixty-nine you left?

MILES: Yes. I should mention that the second year I was there I did what they call American Citizens' Services and that was even less work than doing non-immigrant visas. I was able to meet the late George Kennan that year. He was married to a Norwegian, Annelise, and they had a summer house near Kristiansand in southern Norway. Kennan came into the Embassy to register his boat. Neither of us could know that, years later, Sharon and I would become close and dear friends with his oldest child, Grace, nor that we would visit with him and Annelise at their home in Princeton, nor that we would live in the very same house the Kennans had lived in when he was Ambassador to Yugoslavia.

Q: I can't imagine people going to Norway and raising hell.

MILES: Well, actually, I had quite a few wackos. Nut cases seemed to kind of gravitate toward Norway because they were tolerated, I guess, and if their behavior was such that they could not be tolerated, they were put under observation in a very nice place until we could get them back to the States. I remember getting a call late at night from a Boeing engineer who said that I needed to come down to a local bar and take him under my protection. The Soviets were trying to kidnap him, take him to Russia and get Boeing's secrets out of him, he said. I asked how he knew this and he said that every time he went to get into a taxi, it was a Soviet-made Volga sedan. I said, "Well, you know the Norwegian government just traded a couple of million tons of fish for a hundred Volga taxis so I don't think you're in any danger." This conversation went on for quite a while. He wouldn't accept this explanation so I called a friend of mine in the Oslo Police Department and said, "I need a favor." I explained the situation and I asked my friend to send a couple of uniformed officers to the bar, take this fellow in and let him sleep over in the jail until it was time for his plane to leave for the States the next day. He obliged and that took care of that situation. One young fellow came in and claimed that he was receiving local radio stations through the fillings in his teeth. So there were a few people

like that and then we had a few draft dodgers from the Vietnam War. But mostly these went on to Sweden.

Q: Now I think Sweden is—

MILES: Yes. Norway was a NATO country and so generally these fellows went on to Sweden, which wasn't. I had one American arrested during the whole time I was there. He had tried to kidnap his own daughter from a mixed marriage, a Norwegian-American marriage. He was sentenced to, I think, two years in prison or something. He had his own social worker, a very attractive young lady. He had a TV in his cell. He had access to the library and they were teaching him to weave rugs or some damn thing. He almost had a better life than I did, really. That was it.

Q: Well then, '69 whither?

MILES: Well, then things got more exciting for me and they've remained exciting pretty much ever since. In those days—that was before they had the computer list and you had to try to figure out which assignments were available and how to get the assignment you wanted. One way, especially when you were starting out, was to apply for language training. And so I applied for Russian training to get more Russian, Serbian, Serbo-Croatian they called it then, and a third language, I don't remember what it was—Polish, I think. And to make a long story short, I got Serbo-Croatian training, which meant I would go on to Belgrade, although when they started you at the training you didn't always have a specific ongoing assignment. That came later as they sorted things out. Maybe in the back of the minds of the country director or something they might have known what they would like to do with you, but it wasn't clear to us in the training what that was going to be.

But anyhow, I did that for one year. Four or five people in a small room with the instructor for a year! It was enough to make you scream. You certainly get to know a person during an experience like that.

Q: Who were your instructors?

MILES: Well, old Ivanovic had retired already. We met him—he would come around and say hello to us once in a while. It was a Serbian Orthodox priest named Milosevic, Father Milosevic, and a Croatian fellow whose name escapes me, unfortunately. And I thought the written materials were pretty good, so I learned, building on my Russian, I learned pretty good Serbian even before I went out to Yugoslavia. And then when I finally got my assignment, I was in charge of the Consular Section, which was really quite something for a second assignment.

Q: Oh, yes.

MILES: And Belgrade was a busy place. I mean, the Consular Section had half the personnel that we had in Norway. And yet Yugoslavia had a population five times the

population of Norway. Every consular problem in Yugoslavia was a political problem and there were many of them. Some of the Yugoslav-Americans would come back and raise hell, think they could throw their weight around because they were Americans, insult Tito, you know, get drunk and sing Ustasa songs or God knows what; it was just one thing after another. And then the visas were always a problem, too. So from having been in that warm bath of consular work up in Norway with too many people to do too little work, all of a sudden I was in a very cold bath and not enough people to do the work. Well, that's life in the Foreign Service.

Q: Alright. You were doing this from '68?

MILES: Sixty-nine to '70 was the language training and then '70 to '71 I did the consular work. And then we had the OIG [Office of the Inspector General] inspectors come out and they found one of the political officers who had not had any management experience and meanwhile there I was, beavering away down in the bowels of the building in the Consular Section—it was actually located halfway below ground level—and so they said to the Ambassador, "Why don't you switch these two officers? "And that's how I got into political work. We didn't exactly have career "cones" [career concentrations—administrative, consular, political, etc.] then; you had to rely on lobbying and luck to be able to do the work you really wanted to do. Anyhow, I moved into political work and I stayed there happily ever after.

Q: Okay. Well, just for the record, you had the job I had. I was chief of the Consular Section. Instead of one year I had it for five years. I loved it.

MILES: Whoa! Five years! Well, I liked it too. My wife Sharon and I traveled all over Yugoslavia that first year doing everything from visiting prisoners to helping old people's problems with the U.S. Social Security Administration. Every month the Consular Section delivered about 5,000 social security checks to pensioners who had returned to Yugoslavia. Of course, all this was good for polishing up my Serbo-Croatian.

Q: From '62 to '67.

MILES: Well, you probably were replaced by Erwin von den Steinen and then I replaced Erwin.

Q: Yes.

MILES: I'll never forget Erwin. I remember him well—kind of an eccentric guy. We had about a 10 day overlap and we went out to the prison there in Sremska Mitrovica to visit an American prisoner. We were waiting in the prison cafeteria—a lugubrious place, if ever there was one—and had just gotten our coffee—Turkish coffee, which came in those little brass or copper pots, "*dzhezva*", I think they called them. At least it's pronounced that way. So, as Erwin was talking to me, he picked up the *dzhezva* with the Turkish coffee in it and, as he was talking, he was tilting it up to pour the coffee into a cup. But, you remember, well-made Turkish coffee has this heavy crust of foam on the top, so the

coffee didn't pour out right away. And I was kind of looking out of the corner of my eye, thinking, is this a magic trick? I mean, I had not been in Yugoslavia a week yet so I didn't know about Turkish coffee and I thought, what is he doing? Is he showing me something? What am I supposed to do here? But he just wasn't paying attention. He was too busy talking. Anyhow, Erwin got the *dzhezva* almost totally upside down over the cup and then the coffee came out with a great sploosh all over everything, cup, saucer and table. What a mess. A little story but I'll never forget that scene—or Erwin.

Q: When you got there in 1970, what was the political situation? How would you describe both the Political Section and Yugoslavia and Yugoslav-American relations?

MILES: The relations were pretty good. The Yugoslavs had already had their rapprochement with the Russians, the Soviets, by then. You know, they had had a great falling out in the late 1940s; they had clung to us like a drowning child to a lifeguard. We had provided military and civilian equipment, training and all sorts of things. This political and material support helped them resist Stalin and the Red Army. And then under Khrushchev they did have a rapprochement in the 1950s so the Soviet-Yugoslav relationship would kind of go up and down. It waxed and waned. Tito, of course, was one of the founders of the non-aligned movement and we sometimes had trouble with the non-aligned movement and its leaders—especially rhetorically. I don't think the movement ever caused us much trouble in any other way. But this was the heyday of the movement, and of the several charismatic leaders of the movement, people like Tito, Nkrumah, Indira Gandhi, Sukarno and Nasser. Tito just gloried in it and spent a lot of state money on it and, therefore, it had a certain influence and weight in the world.

In the 1970s our military relationship with the Yugoslavs was not as close as it had been. We sold them some military equipment and we provided some training in that context. We had good economic relations with them and we spent a lot of time just trying to figure out where they were going, what might the future look like, and what influence might Yugoslavia have especially on the satellite countries of the Soviet Union—Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and so on—which frankly was not much. But we were busy trying to ferret that out and, of course, we spent a lot of time on Yugoslav internal developments. They were rather stormy in the early 1970s—well, they've always been stormy, I guess. Anyhow, there was plenty to do and for me and my family, it was a great time, actually. We lived in a house in a Serbian neighborhood with lots of Serbian children. Our daughter Elizabeth, who was only a year old when we arrived, learned Serbian along with English as a first language. We had a live-in maid who only spoke Serbian, so both the children spoke Serbian pretty well.

Q: Did you get any feeling for the ethnic animosities and all?

MILES: Well, yes and no. Anyone who lives there more than two weeks begins to understand that there are difficulties that go way back into the past and you must know about them and beware of them. You quickly learn how ordinary people felt about other ethnic groups. For example, we rented a little house in Cavtat, on the Croatian coast, right below Dubrovnik—a beautiful little place—and we wanted to take our Serbian maid

down to help care for the children and, my goodness, the maid was nervous as a cat. She and her family were Seventh Day Adventists and she didn't spend a lot of time on makeup or fancy dressing or anything like that—but let me tell you, when she came down to the coast with us, she was dressed to the nines. She far outshone us. I mean, it was kind of like Elizabeth Taylor going on tour or whatever. Yet even when she was there, she was so nervous about being surrounded by Croats that we finally sent her home. She just couldn't function in Croatian society; it was very interesting to see that.

I can give you another example of ethnic animosities which was a constant irritant for my family and involved our son Richard's playmates. Our Serbian landlady lived in the basement apartment of our house. Richard, who was 5, 6, 7 on our first tour in Belgrade, played with the children of a Roma family who lived in the neighborhood. The landlady would become almost apoplectic when the Roma kids would come into our garden to play with Richard. She'd scream ugly things at them and call them the equivalent of the N-word and chase them out of the garden. Sharon had rather strong words with the landlady, but until the day we left, the landlady showed pretty open hatred towards those Roma children. So you begin to learn from things like that. And then in some of the consular work, too, I would run into problems resulting from ethnic differences

I remember a case of an American who I still remain friends with, a musicologist, who was collecting folk songs up in the Bosnian mountains. The authorities believed that he was inciting the villagers to sing Ustasa songs, songs of the pre-War and World War II fascist movement in Croatia and Bosnia. In Yugoslavia at that time it was forbidden to sing those songs, forbidden by Yugoslav law. And so they arrested him and seized his equipment and his tapes and we had a hell of a time getting him freed and getting his tapes released.

So it didn't take long to figure out that there was something strange in Yugoslav society. I can remember once as a political officer going up to Ljubljana to interview would-be camp counselors going to America on a summer program. I was in the Political Section at that point and I did ask some normal things like, "What do you do if you have a bunch of kids out in the woods and it's raining and you want to light a fire? How do you go about it?" But I was really interested in their political attitudes and so I would also ask questions like, "Are your parents both Slovenian?" And if I found one where one was a Slovene and one was a Croat or a Serb, I would ask, "What would you consider yourself then?" I was curious about that answer. And I would get usually quite vehement responses: "I am a Yugoslav. I don't consider myself either a Croat or a Slovene—I'm a Yugoslav." Well, this was good to hear but, unfortunately, it was also misleading. We made too much of the idea that the new "Yugoslav" man was going to overcome the ethnic divisions of the past. And as we have seen demonstrated in recent years, these ethnic differences and historical animosities in Yugoslavia were deeply imprinted on many young people by their grandparents and by their peers and we were misleading ourselves about the decline of ethnic separation and animosity in Yugoslavia. We heard what we wanted to hear.

There was an interesting byproduct of those interviews. I stayed in Ljubljana a couple of days and once while I was at an outdoor café, I could tell that I was being photographed by the security services. A half a block down the street, somebody with a long telephoto lens would be photographing a church and then he would kind of swing the camera around in my direction, snap me and swing back to the church; it was not very cleverly done—maybe they wanted me to notice it and to back off from what I was doing. So I thought, okay, well, big deal, I'm not doing anything very unusual here, and I thought no more about it. But then about a year later, the internal political situation was more sensitive. I again went to Slovenia to do camp counselor interviews but, due to the changed political situation, I refrained from asking any overt political questions. Nonetheless, an article appeared in *Politika*, the major newspaper in Belgrade, an article along the lines of, "Why is Mr. Miles asking provocative questions?" The implication was that I had only recently asked provocative questions in Ljubljana. And, indeed, the article contained verbatim some of the questions I had asked a year previously and the writer wondered rhetorically why was I doing this. And the cartoon in the middle of the article was—this was about a half-page article—and the cartoon was a baldheaded guy with glasses, in other words, me, sitting at an outdoor café reading the local Slovenian newspaper and he had two little holes cut out where his eyes could peek through the newspaper. In other words, this fellow, Miles, from the American Embassy is a spy. So the relationship kind of went up and down.

Nonetheless this was not a difficult time for the United States. The real issue in Yugoslavia at that time was the domestic political situation. The early 1970s was a time of the so-called "Croatian Spring" and the subsequent crackdown on the students and the people in Zagreb who had been demonstrating out on the streets and a crackdown also on the Croatian political leadership. The fear in Belgrade was that they were all Croatian nationalists, really. And then a little bit later, just to balance things, Tito cracked down on the so-called "rotten liberals" in the Serbian Party. Well, this was all pretty exciting.

We had a consulate general up in Zagreb, which did report on the events in Croatia, but the Ambassador was keenly interested in what was happening up there. At one point, and I have never seen this happen before or since, he even ordered the Consul General up there—that was Orme Wilson. I don't know if you ever knew Orme? Very old school. Anyhow, the Ambassador ordered Orme to send all of his proposed cables down to the Embassy for clearance before sending them out from Zagreb. You know, consuls general have the right to send out their own messages, they do have that right, but in this case the Ambassador wanted to take a look at the cables first and to censor them. Well, the Ambassador has that authority but I have never heard of it being used in that way. Anyhow, that's what he did.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

MILES: Well, you embarrass me.

Q: Silverman?

MILES: No. Something—what the hell was his name? He later was on the intelligence board. Oh, it was William Leonhart. Later Mac Toon came to replace him.

Q: Who was his DCM, do you remember?

MILES: Tom Enders.

Q: Tom Enders.

MILES: There was a big scandal involving the Ambassador and the DCM.

Q: Were you there when Tom Enders got fired?

MILES: Not only was I there, my wife Sharon and I had hardly arrived when we were right in the center of that whole business. If you remember, on Pushkinova Street there were three homes in a row that housed American Embassy families. There was the DCM's house, another large house where the political counselor lived, and then in between was a much smaller house. We lived there. It was an unusual, octagonal house, a rather interesting house, actually. The writer Lawrence Durrell lived in it when he worked for the British Council in the late '40s, early '50s. Elizabeth corresponded with him later over that house.

Q: That's where the CIA guy, in my time…

MILES: Really? I know those houses well. Years later, when I went back as political counselor, I had that large house I mentioned earlier. So I lived on that same street for six years.

Well, at that time we lived in the smaller house in the middle and of course the Enders were right next door. It was immediately obvious that the Embassy was split right down the middle with the pro-Enders-and-his-wife-Gaetana crowd on one side and the pro-Ambassador-and-his-wife-Pidge crowd on the other. We were smart enough to not get involved in the line that had already been drawn in the sand by the time we got there. The Ambassador's wife and the DCM's wife were both very high powered women, and both tried to recruit Sharon into their respective camps. But we basically just avoided it, which was difficult since we were neighbors. The whole thing was incredibly stupid and what the Yugoslavs and the diplomatic community must have thought of it defies imagination. There were all sorts of real or imagined slights and slurs on both sides and, as far as I could tell, the whole thing resulted from putting four people with overweening egos into a very small space where there was not enough to occupy them in a healthier manner. I could give you some examples of childish behavior on both sides but really this whole business was of interest only to the parties involved and, other than to make the Embassy something of a laughing stock, it played no role whatsoever in our relationship with the Yugoslav government.

I'll never forget one incident though, and, remember, I was still relatively new in the Foreign Service—I had only been in the Foreign Service three years at that point—and I can remember one staff meeting shortly after I arrived at post when the Ambassador and the DCM were both there. Now Enders was a big, huge, beautiful, Greek god kind of a guy—he just exuded charisma. The Ambassador was a short, dark guy with not enough charisma to match his oversized ego. Anyhow, the Ambassador said, "The DCM has some difficulties with the policies that I've been enunciating and some of the analyses which I have made and I'm going to allow him to have his say in this meeting and then I'm going to ask him to leave the meeting." Now, this was a country team meeting. I couldn't believe it. Here I am, a lowly junior officer, thinking what the hell is going on? Enders then said that he thought the Ambassador was not on the right track and that he was personalizing their differences which was unfortunate. He then left the conference room, at which point the Ambassador pretty much tore apart Enders' past history, character and future prospects. Embarrassing, really.

Well, Enders was recalled shortly afterward, He and his wife held a big farewell party with a zillion guests, which the Ambassador had forbidden him to do. So the DCM left, was assigned to be our Ambassador to Cambodia or something like that—not a very happy place in 1970—but later got a nice job as Ambassador to Canada.

Q: He was Ambassador to Canada.

MILES: Ambassador to Canada. Not long after Enders' departure, Ambassador Leonhart, who had a drinking problem, was recalled himself; he was recalled right on the eve of President Nixon's visit. The Ambassador is dead now so I think it's alright to refer to his drinking. And I can remember the plaintive message that he sent to Washington saying something like, "I'll leave as ordered but I remind the Department that the President will arrive ten days after I depart and I'm willing to delay my departure until after the President's visit." And the answer came back, "Leave as scheduled." Really pretty contemptuous, but I think the Department was fed up with these shenanigans.

Q: Who took his place?

MILES: Enders'? Dick Johnson.

Q: Dick Johnson, yes. I took Serbian with Dick Johnson, Larry Eagleburger and David Anderson. We all took Serbian together.

MILES: Yes. I know them all. An above average crop. Well, of course, David is dead. Most unfortunate.

Q: Yes.

MILES: David was Ambassador in Belgrade when I was there in the mid-'80s as political counselor. He was my ambassador for about a year. The wonderful Harry Gilmore was his DCM; it was a dream team.

Q: Well now, let's talk about—on the consular side, how about visas? What was the visa situation?

MILES: I don't recall any particular difficulties. We didn't do nearly as many visas by mail as we had done in Norway, of course, and quite a few of the Yugoslavs had to come in for interviews. I didn't usually do interviews myself unless someone of some significance wanted to protest being denied a visa and then I would maybe do the re-interview. I don't recall any particular problems, to tell the truth.

Q: Well, I had problems. I remember coming in one morning and I saw a bunch of Macedonian women in peasant costume. I thought, oh God, you know, because they were all basically ineligible, but they still were entitled to an interview. And, of course, a large number of the women we did give visas to would go off to America and immediately get married. I would make little notes on the application—you are no longer allowed to do this sort of thing—like, "This lady is never going to get married in America or Macedonia either." Ten days after she gets to the American shore she was married.

MILES: Yes. Well, we had the usual problems but I don't—there were no scandals or particular difficulties. I do remember one particularly vivid letter I received from a fellow whose visa application I had denied. After expressing his disappointment in no uncertain terms, he concluded by saying, "I will hunt you down and shoot you in mouth like rabbit!" I'm not aware that one hunts rabbits like that, but certainly his meaning was clear. Just before President Nixon's visit to Yugoslavia, I turned that one over to the regional security officer and I believe the police followed up on it.

Q: How did you handle the fact that we were in a communist country and we had an anti-communist immigration law?

MILES: Well, it was easy enough to get waivers. You just did the appropriate waiver form, I forget the jargon—"two ii's, two little eyes"—we called it, from the sub-paragraph of the appropriate paragraph in the Immigration and Naturalization Act. It's been so long since I did that work that I can't remember the details, but it was easy enough to put otherwise eligible applicants in for a waiver if you felt they deserved it. Washington made those decisions, of course, but they usually seconded the judgment of the consular officer. You did have to write the waiver data in the person's passport and some people didn't like that. But, if you wanted to go to the States, you had to comply with the regulations. It wasn't a problem, usually—more of a time delay than anything else. For the officials and so on it wasn't any problem at all. You know, they get their own type of visas. We still had to get the waivers but, for them, it was automatic—no interview—provided they were going on official business, of course.

Q: What about, during the summer, getting people from other parts of the Eastern Bloc trying to get into Yugoslavia and get out to the West?

MILES: Yes. Yes, there were always some. And in one case, I'm pretty sure that we had a Soviet provocation. A group of three or four people came in and claimed they wanted to defect from a Russian tour group or something of that sort and the way they were acting was quite suspicious. I had the feeling that the KGB was simply trying to see how easy it was to do this, maybe even to put some of their own people in the United States. I didn't think their behavior was the kind of a thing that ordinary Soviet citizens would think up on their own—one of the young women was rubbing up against the consular officer and… Now, I didn't do the interview, but I heard all about it, and that kind of thing didn't sound like normal behavior for a Soviet visa applicant. Anyhow, we didn't give them visas.

Q: Did you have any difficult issues in the Section?

MILES: One situation stands out although the uncovering of it didn't take place while I was running the Consular Section. There were still some of the residual property claims cases dating from the communist confiscation or nationalization of property owned by Americans. What was the name of that white-haired fellow? Matić, I think it was, who ran that little Property Claims Unit? Several years later, Tom Hutson was running the Consular Section in Belgrade and uncovered some evidence of unethical behavior by Matić. Tom didn't have enough on Matić or didn't want to dig deeper, because Matić had performed pretty good service for us over the decades; but Tom also didn't want him around anymore, so he forced him to take an early retirement. And what Matić was doing was this. There would be a particularly difficult property claims case. Matić would write separately to the person involved in America and say who he was and then tell the American, "While your case is very difficult and we would not be able to resolve it in the usual manner in the Embassy, I might be able to help you using my own time after hours and on weekends." Well, in fact, he wasn't always using his own time. In any case, that was certainly unethical behavior and, as a well-trained lawyer, Matić knew that very well. Matić had started out with the Embassy in 1945 as an employee of the U.S. Army Graves Registration unit in Belgrade. He'd go bumping all over Yugoslavia in a jeep with an American from the unit and try to locate the bodies of American servicemen to send back for burial in the States. Judging from the letters of commendation he showed me, he did yeoman work. We owed him a little consideration.

And then we had the usual run of nut cases. I remember one fellow, and this case gave me the opportunity to meet the Yugoslav political actor and later, dissident, Milovan Djilas. I'll tell you about it. The Yugoslav government informed us that they had an American who had illegally—and mother-naked, I might add—crossed the Yugoslav border into Romania and then had been turned back to Yugoslavia by the Romanians. "He is acting in a bizarre fashion," they said, and would we please come up to the border and take him off their hands? So I sent a consular officer up to the border and when he arrived he found the guy was still naked in his cell and he had, indeed, gone across the border and back again. Despite the lack of clothes, he had with him a "Citizen of the World" passport that he had drawn up himself. I have no idea what happened to his regular passport. He claimed to be an American citizen and the officer believed that he probably was an American by the way he talked and acted. The fellow said he didn't want to see an

American consul and would not talk to a consul. When the consular officer went into the cell where they were holding this fellow, he attacked him. So the consular officer thought, "Okay, this is not someone I'm going to take back to Belgrade in my car," and so we got him transferred down to what amounted to the neuro-psychiatric clinic in Belgrade, where I got to know this flaming nationalist who was the head of that clinic.

Q: Dr. Savic?

MILES: Yes, indeed! Dr. Savic. Very interesting man. I liked him.

Q: Delightful. And his wife, too.

MILES: I liked him very much. I never met his wife but I liked him very much.

Q: Oh, she is a dear.

MILES: I used to have hours of conversation with him. I would go over ostensibly to talk to this wacky American, but in fact I really went to talk to Dr. Savic. Well, one day he had Milovan Djilas in there and he was talking to Djilas—I mean, he had actually arranged it, because at that time we were staying a little bit clear of Djilas; the Ambassador wanted to be the only one to have that contact or to authorize that contact. And so, anyhow, Djilas was there, I was there—I was not going to, you know, throw up my hands and run fleeing from the scene—and so Djilas and I had a very nice conversation. I remember the conversation well; it was right after the Calley trial and Djilas was very impressed with that trial.

Q: This was the trial of a U.S. Army lieutenant who was accused of, and found guilty of—what was the name of the village?

MILES: My Lai. There was a massacre there, yes. Well, Djilas was quite impressed with the way we had brought these officers and men to justice. Even though time had passed—even though this awful event had happened and had been covered up initially—nonetheless, through our system, we had brought Lt. Calley to trial and found him guilty and had sentenced him to prison. Djilas was quite impressed with that as an example of democracy in action. And even though the proceedings and the final results of the trial were imperfect, I think we can be proud of the fact that these men were brought to trial. I think we ourselves should be impressed with it.

Q: Well then, in the Political Section, who was the head of the Section?

MILES: It was Clayton Mudd at first. Clayton was a legend in the Foreign Service. He had actually been in Yugoslavia with the OSS at the end of World War II. If you Google him, you'll find some of the declassified reports he wrote at that time trying to track down some of the Croatian fascists who had escaped arrest at the end of the war. Clayton had an amazing ability to tell from a person's name what part of Yugoslavia he was from.

Then Don Tice came. I'm still good friends with Don. He is long retired and lives up in Chevy Chase. Both of them were good officers and good leaders. Excellent role models, I thought at the time, and I still do.

Q: What sort of things were you—what piece of the political pie were you looking at?

MILES: I followed the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM as we referred to it. And I also kept an eye on Yugoslavia's relations with surrounding countries. Alan Thompson did the internal stuff, which was really where things were most interesting, but he was older and more experienced; Alan was the First Secretary. But the section was so small that we often shifted responsibilities depending on the work load, vacation and travel schedules and so on. It was not always easy work. But when the Yugoslav government would have its typical spat, back and forth with Bulgaria over the perennial Macedonian question or just over trivial border problems, I would be the one to report on that. And on the Non-Aligned Movement, which was at least something which Washington cared about, you could blow on that and make it glow a little bit. Otherwise my work was frankly kind of dull. I mean, I spent my time going around talking to the people in Yugoslavia who were interested in these things and that was about it. I did go down to Kosovo a lot. I was interested in Kosovo, and I did go around and talk to people about the theory and practice of what was known as workers' self-management.

Q: Is that your—

MILES: Yes. Workers' self-management. So I did spend a fair amount of time going around to factories and talking to representatives of the workers' councils and management. And I did "youth": youth was a big thing in those days. The Department even had a special youth officer.

Q: Youth officer, oh yes. You were young enough, yes.

MILES: Yes. And so I did that and I met some interesting people in that process. Going back to the Leonhart-Enders feud though, I remember the Ambassador calling me up to his office and telling me—now, remember, I was a junior officer on his second assignment—and telling me something like, "The DCM is a poor manager and has screwed up the youth portfolio. I'm going to give it to you and I want you to show him how to do that job properly." Wonderful! Talk about poor management. Can you believe it? Anyhow, I did the best I could with that responsibility but my heart was never in it.

Q: One of the interesting things about that period of time was that the Yugoslav foreign service was one of our major sources in places all around the world, from Third World places but also other places like China and the Soviet Union, because the Yugoslavs did provide the bulk of good connections and they liked to talk.

MILES: Yes. At my level I didn't have such a lot to do with that, to tell the truth. That came later when I went back ten years later as political counselor. I don't recall anyone really standing out in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in those early days but that is

probably more a reflection of my low rank and relative inexperience than on the competence of the Foreign Ministry. I would sometimes go over to the Foreign Ministry, accompanying the Ambassador or the political counselor as a note taker, so I got to know some of the higher officials in that way. I got to know Cvijeto Job then. Do you remember Job? And a few of the others. But I didn't spend much time talking to the Yugoslav diplomats myself; I was too low in rank.

Q: Were you pretty much under the impression that the Non-Aligned Movement was basically an ego driven organization? Because when one looks back it, we spent a lot of time talking about it, but it didn't amount to a pile of whatever you want to call it.

MILES: Yes, that's right. Yes, I think so, basically. I actually tried hard to find real substance in it, but these countries were just too disparate and they were not particularly democratic countries. I mean, Kwame Nkrumah, Sukarno and Nasser, you know, these guys, Tito himself—these were not democratic leaders by any stretch of the imagination. OK, Indira Gandhi, maybe. Anyhow, the Department did pay a certain amount of attention to the Non-Aligned Movement and we had a couple of people in the Department who spent full time on it and would go as observers to the international conferences and whatnot. One of them even wrote a monograph on it, but frankly, when all is said and done, the Non-Aligned Movement was kind of like a hot air balloon—highly visible and flying high but full of nothing.

Q: When did you leave Yugoslavia?

MILES: In '73.

Q: Whither?

MILES: I went on the Soviet Desk. Yes, '73 to '75.

Q: Who was sort of the head Sovietologist?

MILES: Well, Jack Matlock was head of the Desk. Jack had a distinguished career and later was Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. In fact, I worked for Matlock three times in my career, starting with that assignment to the Soviet desk. Matlock had three outstanding deputies: Bill Luers, later Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Venezuela; Bob Barry, Ambassador to Bulgaria and Indonesia, and Milt Bearden. Milt was with the CIA. Later he was quite involved in Afghanistan matters after the Soviet invasion and has written two really good books about that period. Stape Roy was the head of my section, which was what we called "Multilateral Affairs", and then Stape was later replaced by Ben Zook. I don't know if you knew Ben or not.

Q: No.

MILES: A real character. I loved Ben. Stape Roy went on to become one of our Career Ambassadors and Jack, of course, had his own career as Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Q: Well, how stood relations, this would be '70-what—'72 to '74?

MILES: What was that then, I'm sorry?

Q: I mean, when you were on the Desk?

MILES: Seventy-three to '75.

Q: Seventy-three to '75. In '73, when you got there, how stood relations with the Soviet Union?

MILES: Well, this was the heyday of détente, you remember, and so relations were good but, of course, that only went so far. You had the beginning of our programs of scientific co-operation. We were doing a fair amount with the Soviets on ecology, putting tags on polar bears, that sort of thing. Soviet scientists could attend conferences in western countries; our scientific people could go to the Soviet Union. There would usually be an annual summit—the Desk would help to prepare for those. But the Russians still had their agenda and we still had ours and they were still considered "the threat". I used to go out and talk to college groups and groups of interested citizens, international affairs councils, that kind of thing, around the United States, to talk up détente, basically, and it was not always an easy sell out there. Oddly enough, in the Midwest there was more understanding than there was in some of the more sophisticated parts of the country, because, you remember, we were starting to sell grain, to sell corn and wheat to the Soviet Union, and the farmers thought that was just jim-dandy. But on arms control issues, the Americans I talked to, and this was all over the country—the West, the South, wherever—people were uneasy, they were skeptical.

Q: Well, did you have any particular piece of the action?

MILES: No, not on arms control issues. Arms control is a world unto itself and I just never entered that world. That may have been a mistake on my part, but that's the way things worked out for me. In our shop, multilateral affairs, we basically divided up the world geographically. I did Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America and the United Nations. The United Nations portfolio got me into all sorts of other interesting things like direct broadcast satellites—that's what we called them at that time. Of course, there were no such satellites then, but the Soviets and the French in particular really wanted to have very strong national control of whatever TV might eventually be transmitted into their countries or into francophone Africa or the Soviet bloc. What with all the satellite TV that we have now—you can receive satellite TV everywhere from a New York penthouse to some hovel in Bangladesh—it seems strange to recall all those food fights over these issues in various international forums and the like. But that's one of the issues that I followed some thirty years ago.

And then we had someone else in the office who did Asia—Southwest Asia and Asia proper. And then there was a whole different office that did Soviet internal affairs. The bilateral relationship was largely handled by Matlock and the deputies.

Q: Well, how did we view Soviet activity in Africa? Because there was quite a bit at this time.

MILES: There was a lot of concern over the Soviets in Africa and in our own minds we drew them maybe larger than life. We saw that they were spending a lot of money there; we saw the Patrice Lumumba University thing in Moscow, where they would bring people up from Africa or other parts of the third world for full scholarships to study everything from engineering to medicine. The students would study six or seven years to become a doctor or whatever and then go back to their home country. There was a lot of fretting about that. We saw them peddling arms; we saw them cozying up to dictators and strongmen. And we worried over the ideological appeal of all this. There was always this constant argument in the Department about ideology—is there a Soviet ideology, and if there is, how important is it? To what degree do people actually subscribe to it? And with the exception of Cuba, maybe, I don't think the Washington foreign policy establishment ever really paid that much attention to ideology. I was always interested in ideology because I had studied Marxism-Leninism in college and I felt that it was a motivating factor; maybe not the primary motivating factor any more, but still a motivating factor and I thought that it had a certain appeal in the third world, especially to young, idealistic people. But frankly, we never were able to get much traction on the issue of ideology with the Seventh Floor in the Department or over at the White House.

Q: Well, from your own personal viewpoint, did you see the Soviet effort taking hold in Africa?

MILES: Well, they were active certainly and we couldn't tell how effective it was; there was a question mark over it at that time.

Q: This is tape three, side one, with Dick Miles. Yes.

MILES: The Soviets had strong diplomats in Africa, very good people. They were selling some arms; they were providing some economic assistance. They still had a stronghold in Egypt. That was before the switch. They had a stronghold in Somalia, which was on the Red Sea. Well, stronghold in the sense that they had a strong relationship. So yes, we did fret about the Soviets and about the Cubans as well. The Cubans were heavily involved in Africa as well—we believed at Soviet behest. I'm not sure to what degree that was true, but in any case the Cubans were definitely there so there was certainly a hell of a lot of smoke to be seen if not a great amount of actual fire.

Q: What about Latin America? Was there much happening there?

MILES: Well, not a lot at that time. The radicalization of Central America came a bit later. With hindsight, there was probably more going on than we realized, but we on the Soviet Desk didn't pay much attention to Central America at that time, to speak frankly. Cuba was sort of isolated and we were happy enough with that situation. Remember I'm talking about these situations from the standpoint of Soviet policy.

Q: Did you have a Middle East—?

MILES: Yes. And I spent probably most of my time on the Middle East.

Q: What was happening in the Middle East at this time?

MILES: Well, the Soviets were heavily involved with the Egyptians. We were still heavily involved with Saudi Arabia and in Iran, of course. The two pillars of our regional policy, Kissinger said. I remember sitting in when one of the fairly high ranking Soviet diplomats from their embassy in Washington called on the Israeli Desk officer. It was a Friday afternoon, on the eve of the October War, and I sat in from the Soviet Desk. The consensus among all of us was that, despite heightened tension in the region, it was going to be a quiet weekend. We were concerned because the Soviets had withdrawn their dependents from Egypt and we had indications of a military buildup on the Egyptian side but we also had indications that the Israelis were aware of this and had organized a counter-buildup as well, so, practically speaking, we didn't think the situation would deteriorate over the weekend. And that meeting actually calmed us all down a little bit because the Soviet officer indicated that this withdrawal of dependents was just a precautionary measure on the part of the Soviet Ambassador in Cairo and that the Soviet Embassy in Washington thought things would quiet down.

Well, I was called the next morning, Saturday morning, by Jack Matlock who said, "Dick, do you remember our conversation yesterday after your meeting? I'm sorry to say that war has broken out in the Middle East so you may want to come on in." Well, that began a pretty intense period of activity. Of course, Kissinger was extremely busy with all this, but we all did our best to provide him the best information and analysis that we could produce.

I don't remember if Dr. Kissinger was still at the NSC or if he had moved over to the State Department at that point but he was of course vitally interested in what was going on there and the degree to which the Soviets might be involved. And there was a considerable fuss over whether or not some Soviet nuclear weaponry might or might not have been shipped out through the Bosporus for potential use. It was never clear. It was never settled, really, but, boy, there was a lot of interest in that, let me tell you. So that was a very exciting time, I must say. And of course the United States was doing things like going to a higher DEFCON status which meant that the American military planes were all fueled and ready to go, weapons checked and made ready. So it was a tense time.

Q: Well, if I recall, were not the—some Soviet airborne divisions alerted or something?

MILES: Yes. I think seven divisions were alerted down in the Northern Caucasus and made ready for possible deployment. That, plus the possible movement of Soviet nuclear weaponry, got us pretty excited.

Q: How much information were you getting from the Israelis about what was going on?

MILES: Well, you know, there are layers and layers of intelligence, and at the level at which I was operating at that time I didn't see a lot of that intelligence. And so the stuff that I got through the ordinary communications system was not terribly helpful, frankly.

Q: Was there a feeling at your level that the Soviets might come in?

MILES: I think the general feeling was that they would not, that they were posturing and, of course, we would do that too. We'd send an aircraft carrier just to be there, to demonstrate that we know what's going on, we're uneasy, we are prepared but we don't really intend to use our power. And the Soviets were doing the same thing for the same reason. Anyhow, I think that was the general feeling in the Department and the NSC. But there is always an element of unpredictability in these matters and so there was also genuine concern in Washington over developments.

Q: Well, weren't the Soviets, too, in a sort of peculiar position? Because Sadat had essentially kicked the Soviets out, hadn't he?

MILES: Not yet.

Q: Hadn't kicked them out?

MILES: Oh, no, not at all. I don't remember the exact degree of military involvement that they had at that time, but Egypt possessed mountains of Soviet-supplied military equipment. All of the Egyptian officers had been trained by the Soviets and I'm sure they had strong personal relationships. But I don't think Soviet officers were out in the front area particularly, except for a few military observers. I never had any good information along those lines, but certainly the Soviet officers were still present in Egypt and in large numbers.

Q: Although you weren't dealing with internal things, you were surely aware of the work of Khrushchev? How was he viewed from the desk?

MILES: I don't recall exactly who was in power at that time; I'd have to look at the chronology.

Q: Actually Khrushchev was out by then.

MILES: I think he must have been.

Q: Yes, he must have been out. It was Brezhnev.

MILES: I had studied some of Khrushchev's actions when I was back at Indiana University and I think, with the major exception of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which broke out while I was at the university, I think the general feeling was that Khrushchev was doing some pretty exciting things which were going to change Soviet society but that it would remain Soviet, you know—these things wouldn't bring the Soviet Union down, cause its collapse or whatever, although basically the things that Khrushchev initiated were the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. We just didn't see it at that time.

Q: Well then, you left the desk in '75?

MILES: Yes.

Q: Where did you go?

MILES: I went off to the Army Russian Institute at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, for advanced Russian studies. You had to have an ongoing assignment to the Soviet Union in order to be selected as the one State Department officer who would get that training for the year, the academic year, and so I had my ongoing assignment to the Political Section in Moscow to do Soviet foreign policy. It was a bit like winning the lottery.

Q: How did you find that?

MILES: Oh, I thought it was excellent training. First of all, of course, it's an idyllic place to live. I mean, I give the Army full credit for selecting some of the best sites that the SS had owned. The SS was declared a criminal organization at the end of World War II and the American occupying power seized a good deal of SS property for its own use. We still had some of that property, including the facility used for the Army Russian Institute and the housing for the administration, the faculty and the students. You had to have a 3-3 level in Russian language to be accepted at Garmisch. The instructors were all émigré Russians and the classes were all taught in Russian; there were no classes in English. The Institute administration tried to conduct business in Russian, at least as best as they could, because you had some Germans in there and also some American officers and staff NCOs with only fair Russian. You were supposed to speak Russian 100 percent of the time, even in the appropriate extracurricular activities, until you were home, off duty. And the classes were—there were some actual language classes, but generally you were studying Soviet and Russian history, geography, economics, literature and so on, and those were all taught in Russian, so it was a fantastic experience. There were a few special sessions on Soviet military terminology, structure and weapons but more as a language acquisition tool than as professional military subjects. Anyhow, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I thought it was a fine program. The Army guys who went there, mostly captains and majors, had come out of a two-year course at Monterey, California, at the Defense Language Institute, which is why we civilians had to have the 3-3 in order to go to the Institute. Everyone except the State and USIA officers—there was one of each—stayed for two years at Garmisch, some of them going on to become defense attachés, most of them going back

and supervising listening posts or DIA analyst positions. A very few people went to Detachment R, the so-called Potsdam Mission in East Germany. Later as we moved toward serious arms reduction agreements and monitoring with the Soviets, many Garmisch graduates were used either as members of our negotiating teams or as examiners out in the field. At this later stage in our relations, we had U.S. military officers stationed at weapons facilities in the Soviet Union just as the Soviets had their officers in the United States. But back in the 70s, there were only so many billets in the Soviet Union itself and that is one reason why the Army officers got this training. It was an effort on the part of the Army to bring them up to snuff on the real Russian language that they would be required to work with for much of their career. There were a few officers from other services and agencies there as well but mostly there were Army officers. So it was fascinating, really, plus the experience of simply living in Garmisch, one of the world's most beautiful places. As a family, we skied, skated, hiked and biked for a whole glorious year.

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

MILES: Yes, it probably is.

Q: And we'll pick this up in 19—

MILES: Yes, when I left in '76.

Q: Seventy-six?

MILES: Right.

Q: And we'll pick you up going to the Soviet Union.

MILES: Yes, that's good. Fine.

Q: Okay, today is the 22nd of March, 2007. Dick, you were in, what was it, Moscow?

MILES: Yes.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MILES: From the summer of 1976 until the summer of 1979.

Q: What sort of job did you have there?

MILES: I was in the Political Section. At that time the Section was divided—I think it still is divided—into two halves: an internal section and an external section. I was in the external section, which meant I was doing ordinary diplomatic work, trying to figure out what the Soviets were up to in the Middle East, Africa, Central America and a little bit with the United Nations—we didn't really focus on that very much—and then trying to

explain U.S. policy in those parts of the world to Soviet colleagues and also to foreign diplomats. There were so many diplomats in Moscow; it was one of the few places where I have served where there truly was an international community.

Q: How would you describe, when you arrived in '76, relations between the Soviet Union and the United States?

MILES: Well, "arrived" is the operational word. This was still détente, the period of détente, and you heard good things about the relationship. For me, it was not an overtly hostile atmosphere in which to work. This was not true for many other members of the Embassy staff, of course. There was the usual skullduggery on the part of the KGB, the GRU [Main Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet military], and so on and you were constantly running up against the internal controls which the Soviet State had for decades imposed on its own people so you could not have close relationships, really, or if you did, you endangered the people that you were trying to have that relationship with. I'll give you an example of that later on. But '76, '77: this was pretty much a normal, reasonably benign period during the Cold War. In fact these were the waning days of détente, but people didn't quite know they were waning yet. The cooling of the relationship was just over the horizon. And then toward the end of detente, in '78, '79, when a number of things happened, the relationship went downhill fast.

Q: We'll come to that.

MILES: Yes. So this is what changed while I was there.

Q: Okay. Firstly, who was the Ambassador and who was your initial chief? Sort of describe your impression of the Embassy and personalities there.

MILES: Well, Walter Stoessel was the Ambassador when I first arrived and I forget when he left but he wasn't there very long while I was there. A very nice fellow, I liked him. Very much old school but also with those wonderful, old school qualities of politeness, dignity and style. We've lost much of that in modern times. And then Mac Toon came. Toon was also old school but rather more aggressive, I would say, and more vocally opinionated than Stoessel, if I may say so.

In the Political Section, let me see, Marshall Brement was Section Chief but only had a few months to go when I arrived. He was later Ambassador to Iceland. Then Tom Simons came as the Section Chief. He then went on to be Ambassador to Poland and Pakistan and is now retired, up at Harvard. And, gee, I'm trying to think who the external section chief was. Ted McNamara, who had a fine career afterward, was the head of the external section for a while.

Q: Yes, I'm interviewing Ted now.

MILES: Are you really? Well, give him my regards.

Q: I will.

MILES: And I'm trying to think who—he wasn't there the whole three years I was there, but I can't for the life of me recall who the other fellow was.

Q: Well, who—this was Brezhnev?

MILES: Yes, right.

Q: How was Brezhnev and some of the Politburo viewed at that time?

MILES: Well, Brezhnev was considered sort of a joke almost and we used to try to listen to his speeches; we'd hear them live on television or whatever and they were very hard to understand. I mean, he mumbled so and his words were slurred and it was clear that he was really losing it.

He was a smart enough fellow in the early days and powerful enough, but, boy, he was certainly beginning to lose it by the late 1970s. But in the external section, we were all pretty busy there in Moscow, and so we didn't wander off into each other's areas very much. In my work I hardly paid any attention to what Brezhnev did or didn't do or said or didn't say, but rather spent time with the Foreign Ministry people, with a few Soviet media people, with the academics in the think tanks and so on. Quite a few people were accessible to us in that strangely closed world. You had to wait to get an appointment but almost always you would get it; there were very few people who wouldn't actually see you, and I met some interesting people at that time. I remember waiting almost three years for an appointment to see Aleksandr Dzasokhov, who was head of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization. By the way, that meeting was disappointing when it did take place. Years later, when I was in Georgia, Dzasokhov became President of the Republic of North Ossetia.

I tried hard, and quite unsuccessfully, to cultivate a relationship with a few experts in the Central Committee apparatus because there was a parallel structure in the Soviet Union at that time. There was a governmental apparatus and then there was the Party apparatus, which sort of paralleled it, including in foreign affairs, but I was never able to gain access to the Central Committee. They kept themselves aloof except for diplomats from the so-called "socialist camp". Anyhow, part of the fun of living in Moscow at that time was that you could eventually wear down the resistance of some people who really didn't much want to see you. Some Western visitors would just pop in for a few days, pop out again, and would never have a chance of seeing some of these people. But if you worked at it, cultivated people, developed a reputation for discretion, then, after it became known that you were a sensible person, in time, you could see some rather interesting people.

Q: Well, let's take a look now at how things were at the beginning and how they changed.

MILES: They did change; they did change.

Q: How did we view the Soviet Union? I mean, by hemisphere or by policy or what? I mean, as far as the international side?

MILES: Well, I think that all American government experts—the diplomats, the defense attachés, the Agency analysts—considered the Soviet Union to be a hostile power. But we didn't spend a lot of time talking about the communist threat or international communism or anything like that and we didn't see very much of the 1940s and 1950s style of subversive and violent activity. But we certainly followed and were sometimes concerned about what these people were doing abroad, especially in Third World countries. I didn't follow Soviet policy in the member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Someone else did that and that was an interesting area too, but I was following Africa so I did the best I could to determine what the Soviets were up to in Africa. Well, they were very active in Africa at that time. And we fretted about that and we sent our reports back to Washington and then the experts in Washington fretted about it. Cuba at that time was sending medical people and military people into Angola and so I wanted to know what that amounted to, who was behind that, what were they thinking and doing, was this planned or coordinated with the Soviet Union, how effective were they, what were the South Africans doing about it, etc. It was all pretty heady stuff, really.

And we had good access to people who knew a lot about these things. Gromyko's son—a decent fellow although not nearly as bright as his father, the Foreign Minister—ran the African Institute and I used to hang out at the African Institute all the time. And the African Institute had responsibility, in an academic sense, for the entire continent of Africa, so it wasn't just Sub-Saharan Africa, but it was North Africa and even the Middle East up to the Suez Canal. And then there was the Oriental Studies Institute which was then led by Yevgeny Primakov, who later became head of the intelligence service and Prime Minister, a very powerful person. He's still around, by the way. I saw him several times subsequently so we established a kind of distant relationship at that time because I'd also hang out in his institute and he'd see me in the hall sometimes and we'd say hello. I didn't have much to do with him personally but I met him and got to know him and that was very useful. And these institutes had very good people. The Oriental Studies Institute followed the Palestinian question and also what was happening in Iran. And of course as Iran became more and more tense and in turmoil because of the overthrow of the Shah, I began to focus more and more on Iran.

I also got to know, Sergo Mikoyan, the son of Anastas Mikoyan. Sergo was head of the Latin American Countries Institute and Editor in Chief of their scholarly journal. A very sweet man and one of the very few Soviet officials I dealt with that I would consider a friend.

In the external section, we then divided the geographical world up—sort of like cutting an orange into halves. And so I took Iran and everything to the west and Dale Herspring and, later, Peter Tomsen, took Afghanistan and everything to the east; then we kind of met somewhere around the globe, which was a pretty good division, to tell the truth. Always reminded me of the Treaty of Tordesillas. As time went on we also began to be more and more concerned about Afghanistan and what was going to be happening in

Afghanistan. And we had big arguments within our own group but also with Embassy Kabul and with Washington about what we thought the Soviets might do vis-à-vis Afghanistan. Those were pretty heady times.

Q: Let's talk about Africa. Cuba seemed to be sort of the surrogate Soviet Union in Ethiopia, Angola and all. Did you see the Soviets or did we see the Soviets having a major policy toward there or were they just fishing in troubled waters?

MILES: Well, I personally spent a fair amount of time trying to figure that out, to try to determine to what degree Cuba was acting independently. For sure there would have to be some vague coordination at the top but what kind of coordination? Would it just be informing each other what the other would be doing or would it be closer: "Why don't you get involved with the Angolans and we'll stay involved over here somewhere else?" Or, "Can we help pay for the transport of your people across the Atlantic Ocean or whatever?" We never figured out the degree to which Cuban activities were coordinated, if at all, by the Soviet Union. We assumed that there was this basic level of information sharing and an implicit acceptance of burden sharing in what they were trying to do but it was never clear to us the degree to which this was really worked out by the big shots and a plan drawn up of "You do this at this time and place and we'll do this at this time and place and we'll help you do this and you can help us do that." That was never clear to us and we tried hard to find out more about it but we were never very successful in that.

Q: When you went to the African Institute, what sort of answers were you getting?

MILES: Well, they weren't very forthcoming on what the Soviet Union was up to. They were totally unforthcoming on what anybody else might be up to—the Cubans, for example. They, of course, focused to a large degree on what we and the British and the French were doing, and so they imagined or professed to imagine all sorts of nefarious plots and conspiracies there. So I did spend a good deal of time trying to bat some of that down and put it in perspective. I spent a fair amount of time working on Horn of Africa issues and of course Egypt fell within the sphere of the African Institute too. There was a great shift, you recall, at that time, when Egypt ceased to have the Soviet Union as a patron and turned to us as a patron. And a very similar thing happened in the Horn of Africa with Somalia and Ethiopia. These were seismic shifts, so I tended to focus more on things that were actually happening rather than trying to ferret out what the Soviets might be up to in a particular country or in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example. They were active and they were spending a fair amount of money. It was something we did try to keep an eye on, but in a general way.

The African diplomats, by the way, at least at my level, were pretty much worthless in trying to help us scope out some of these activities. They just—they either knew nothing or they were busy selling icons or dabbling in black market currency exchange, or they were indeed doing things with the Soviet Union that they didn't want known and they certainly weren't about to tell an American diplomat about it. So while they were friendly enough, and Sharon and I attended some fantastic parties at the homes of these young

African diplomats, it was all pretty much a worthless exercise in terms of actually learning anything.

Q: Let's turn to the Middle East. Did you sense an unease or discomfort in the fact that the Egyptians got onboard? It was Camp David and all that sort of American diplomatic energy. This must have been quite a shock to them.

MILES: The diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were more guarded, but people in the African Institute had long since been disillusioned by Nasser and Sadat. My Soviet colleagues simply felt they were being taken for a ride. By Soviet standards, they were spending large amounts of money on the Egyptian military and some grandiose economic assistance projects and they were getting precious little in return for it. So I don't think the falling out with Egypt was a big shock to them. What they expressed to me was a considerable annoyance at the Egyptians for doing this so abruptly, just walking away from them. And they also expressed a kind of cynicism about the degree to which we would be willing to spend the kind of money that would be necessary to keep the Egyptians on our side. I remember one of them saying to me, "Do you Americans really have so much money that you can afford to have Egypt as a friend and an ally?" And I said, "Yes, you bet! Egypt being what it is and located where it is; yes, we can afford it and yes, we will spend the necessary money." That proved to be very true although my Soviet colleagues were right: it does cost a lot of money to have the Egyptians as friends.

Q: Okay. You were there; the Shah was going downhill rapidly and went down. What were you picking up about the Soviet view of Iran?

MILES: Well, that was some of the most interesting work I did, I think, and I really liked the Russian diplomats that I dealt with at that time. I felt they were serious people and not particularly ideological, and they had a dog in the fight because of their geographic location, you know. They had a long common border with Iran, and they were interested in Iran because of that and also because we were interested in Iran. But it was not an ideological struggle. There was not really any kind of a Communist Party in Iran. The Shah was as anti-communist as anyone on earth, and Ayatollah Khomeini was close behind him if not ahead of him on that score. So ideology didn't really enter into it; the Iran problem was one on which they could be a little more objective and a little more willing to enter into discussions. And so I had some good discussions with them.

The fear was, and I shared that fear, one of misapprehension on either side. For example, the Soviets feared that we would intervene militarily to prop the Shah up. We already had a strong military assistance program in Iran. We had military and other advisors and so on, but we didn't have any particular troop presence in Iran, so the Soviets were afraid that we would try to insert a troop presence in some way right on their southern border, which they didn't like. They wouldn't like it now—the Russians wouldn't like it now—and the Soviets didn't like it then. Our fear was something of a mirror image of that—that they might think we were going to intervene and would pre-empt us by inserting a Soviet military presence. And, as you know, there was a precedent for that back during World War II, when Stalin sent the Red Army in and occupied northern Iran

for quite a while. They later declared a government there and only withdrew under a certain amount of pressure. So there was kind of a precedent. And it would be easy to do, logistically. The terrain is such that you can in fact do that relatively easily. And so my Soviet colleagues and I spent a certain amount of time trying delicately to feel each other out and in a way wanting to be able to reassure our respective bosses that there was no such planning—that there was sensitivity and unease, but that there was no real planning for a pre-emptive move on either side. I don't overestimate the role that I was playing. For one thing, I wasn't privy to any plans that we might have had to help the Shah militarily. But in my reading of the tea leaves, this was not something that we were gearing up to do. So maybe to some degree that objective dialog at a working level helped to keep the two sides calmed down and helped to prevent any hotheads from doing something we all might later have regretted.

Q: Well, in a way, when you're a diplomat in a situation like that—I mean, obviously your antennae are out trying to figure out what the hell the Soviets are up to. But somebody at the Soviet Embassy had to be trying to figure out what the Americans were up to, you know, back in Washington.

MILES: Oh sure, yes.

Q: And were you comfortable in assuring them we wouldn't put troops in or were you—?

MILES: Well, I wouldn't use the word, "assuring". After all, I was just discussing the situation with my Soviet colleagues. I wasn't delivering demarches or anything. But these were serious discussions albeit at the working level. In preparation for them I did read all the traffic I could get my hands on and I had to our defense attachés and others in the Embassy. Of course, real war planning is something you don't get into at the working level—or even higher than that. In my experience, only a small handful of people know precisely that offensive military action is about to happen. I did experience one exception to that rule. When we were about to go to war with Serbia in 1999; I did know that military action was imminent. In fact, we used the steps toward war which NATO was taking as a form of pressure on Milosevic to do what we wanted him to do vis-à-vis Kosovo.

However, I can also remember when we had the invasion, or whatever you want to call it, of Grenada. I was in the Politico-Military Bureau at that time and a Marine colonel who was working for me called up one of his military friends down in Florida who had some commanding role in that part of the world. His friend was out on the golf course at the time and it turned out in this guarded telephone conversation that he knew absolutely nothing about the imminent intervention in Grenada. The fellow from my office said something like, "John, are you aware of anything special that's going on in your neck of the woods right now?" And "John", whoever he was, a general, said, "No, no. I'm out on the golf course—a beautiful day here in Florida, and everything seems to be quiet." My officer said, "I think you'd better look over your shoulder at the Atlantic Ocean and see if you can see or smell some stack gas over there, on the horizon. You'd better get back to your headquarters and do some looking around." And so that was the first that this

general, who had some responsibility for military operations in that area, found out that we were about to invade Grenada. So you don't always know.

And events, as you remember, events in Iran happened very rapidly. I remember getting a copy of a cable that Embassy Paris had sent out because Ayatollah Khomeini was living in Paris at that time, and the reporting officer very nicely described the Ayatollah's ideas and his thoughts and plans about getting ready to return to Iran because of this turmoil. And my boss at that time circled the subject line about the Ayatollah and sent it down to me with a little note saying, "Dick, who or what is an ayatollah?" And I wrote back and said, "Well, you know, we all probably should start learning these things." And I was more prescient than I thought. I didn't know, of course, that within about two weeks the Shah would flee the country, the Ayatollah would return, and a whole new chapter of Iranian and world history would begin to unfold.

There is an interesting denouement to my comments on Iran. At that time, when we shredded classified documents, the shredder cut them into long, narrow strips. They were not shredded into tiny, unreadable bits of paper the way they are nowadays. So, after the radical students had taken over the Chancery in Tehran, they gathered all these piles of shredded "strips" and laboriously matched and pasted those strips together, and they reconstructed quite a few of the classified cables and reports that had been in the Embassy files. Then they issued a set of books—14 volumes, actually—called "Documents from the Nest of Spies". Several of the classified cables that I wrote from Moscow were in there, recounting my conversations with Soviet diplomats and other Soviets about the situation in Iran. I had, of course, sent copies to our embassy in Tehran and these had been duly filed away. I bought a set of those books and I can tell you that I read those cables very, very carefully to see if I had burned my Soviet colleagues in any way or if I had said things that were over the top. And, I'm very happy to say, they held up quite well.

Q: Well, you had left, I guess, by the time the hostages were taken? No, no, that was—

MILES: Yes, the students took over the Chancery in November 1979 and I had left earlier that year, in the summer. So I missed that and also the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December. However, my wife Sharon and I were in the Embassy in Moscow when Spike Dubs was killed in Kabul. That happened in February 1979. Before Ambassador Dubs went to Kabul he had been the DCM in Moscow so he still had a lot of friends in Moscow.

Q: Did people like the Syrians and all—did they play much of a role? Not in the Iranian thing but just in the Arab-Israeli conflict?

MILES: We were very interested in what the Syrians thought. They had good diplomats; it was a professional foreign service and they were among the people that I stayed in touch with. I also stayed in touch with the Yemeni diplomats, who were very knowledgeable about regional events. I really liked the way the Yemenis made coffee. Often I would see the Yemeni Ambassador. Moscow is such a big place that our

ambassador just didn't have time to pay attention to everyone and many of these foreign embassies were small. The Yemeni Embassy probably had no more than five or six people in it, so when I'd go over, I'd often be received by the Ambassador and it was usually the deputy that I saw in the Syrian Embassy. He was a very sensible person. This was an interesting time in Moscow because, while I was there, the situation turned 180 degrees around with regard to our relationship with the Egyptians and also with our relationship with the Ethiopians and the Somalis. So when I started my assignment in 1976, I was on reasonably good terms with the Ethiopians and not with the Somalis. With the Egyptians, prior to the shift, I had not had much of a relationship at all but, after the shift, I developed a very close relationship with the Egyptians, including the Egyptian Chargé, Farouk Shelbaya. He later came to Washington, was deputy at their embassy here in Washington, a very nice fellow. And I remember being in his apartment in Moscow when we both listened together to the famous speech when Sadat had gone over to Israel and had addressed the Israeli Knesset. Truly, that was a dramatic moment and it was an honor to be able to sit there with the Egyptian Chargé and listen to that speech.

Q: Were the Soviets concerned about what was happening at Camp David, you know, our strong involvement in the Middle East peace process?

MILES: I just don't recall the Soviet reaction to Camp David. I'm sure it was high on my agenda at the time, but, unfortunately, my memory is blank. I expect the Soviets were going through a confusing period trying to construct a revised Middle East policy from the wreckage left after they were ousted from Egypt. Egypt is such an important place, and to suddenly be replaced by the United States, that was quite a blow to their prestige. Of course, they retained their influence with the various Palestinian liberation organizations. But, in terms of state to state relationships, the "loss" of Egypt was a body blow.

Q: In a way, when you look at it, what would be in it for the Soviets in the Middle East?

MILES: Well, depending on which country you're talking about, the Middle East was either on or very close to Soviet borders, so there was a security angle there. We seem to have difficulty understanding Soviet and, now, Russian, sensitivity to their borders. The Middle East also provided the Soviets an increased capability either to keep things stable or unstable, depending on how they wanted to play the issues. Tension kept the West off balance and it also promoted the prospects for arms sales. An enormous quantity of armor, artillery, aircraft and air defense systems and small arms and ammunition were sold to the Egyptians. Training was provided as well. And of course Egypt is a strategically located country, sitting on the Suez Canal and on the Mediterranean Sea the way it is. It's had a strategic location for five or six thousand years. Politically it meant a lot to the Soviets. Egypt was still important in the Non-Aligned Movement. But mainly, I think if their influence had been replaced by that of France or Italy, it wouldn't have bothered them nearly as much as it did to see their influence replaced by that of the United States. They do tend to think in terms of a zero sum game.

Q: This was your first time in the Soviet Union?

MILES: Yes.

Q: What was our—I realize you weren't dealing in internal affairs, but what was your impression of the system and how things were being handled? Did you get around at all?

MILES: I made a few trips, but I didn't travel a lot in the Soviet Union at that time. My work was pretty much in Moscow. My wife Sharon worked for the Information Agency while we were in Moscow and, actually, she traveled quite a bit. I remember going to Dushanbe in early 1979, down in Tajikistan. I was trying to ferret out what the locals thought about what was happening in Afghanistan which was only—the border was only about 150 kilometers from Dushanbe and Dushanbe was only 450 kilometers from Kabul, itself. Now, to a man—from the party and republic and city officials to the Grand Mufti of the Islamic community and on down to the taxi drivers and the market vendors—the Tajiks professed to have no knowledge of Afghanistan whatsoever. "Afghanistan?" they would say. "Is that where…," with the meaning of, "Is it on the moon or something?" They absolutely did not want to talk about Afghanistan with an American diplomat. Well, this ubiquitous silence was itself cause for concern. Clearly there was tension in the air. But as far as specific information was concerned, the trip was totally worthless. Of course, it was very interesting to be there as a tourist, but that was not the purpose of my trip.

I remember one of those lovely Foreign Service moments from that trip sitting outdoors on a "*topjon*"—a raised wooden platform—under the "*chinar*" trees. We call them plane trees. I was the guest of the Grand Mufti. The mosque was there, snowcapped mountains in the background—a beautiful day sitting there with our shoes off on Oriental carpets with lamb stew and tea and melons and so forth, just beautiful. And, of course, I wanted to talk about Afghanistan and also about Islam in Tajikistan. However, the first question the Grand Mufti had was whether the Senate would ratify the SALT-II agreement once it was reached. He had been primed by his KGB masters just as I had been primed, but unfortunately we wanted to talk about totally different subjects. Would have made a good movie scene.

One had the impression before going to the Soviet Union that it was a very formidable place, a world power, a nuclear power. After you were there a while, you could appreciate the resources and the power of the State and the size of the country. I remember being impressed just with the size of Moscow. Moscow is an enormous city and has a great subway system, very broad streets, tall buildings and so on. Some people thought that the massive size of the streets and buildings was to make people feel small and intimidated; I simply think that Russians think on a grand scale. But then, living there in those days—the mid-1970s—you began to see things that made you realize that things were not as they seemed, that this was not as powerful a state as they would have you believe. I remember early on, taking my kids out to the Park of National Economic Achievements—this was a permanent fairground near the outskirts of Moscow. Each of the member republics had a pavilion out there and they would display their wares. There would be a display of melons from Uzbekistan or a display of textiles from Estonia,

whatever, and also exhibits of technical things. They had a model of the first satellite, the Sputnik, and so forth. So it was kind of exciting. OK, fine. And then the kids had to go to the bathroom, of course, so we took them into the public toilets there, and beside each toilet was a little stack of torn up squares of *Pravda*. I mean, they didn't even have toilet paper. An old Russian lady was actually snipping up the back copies of *Pravda* into little six or eight inch squares that she stacked very neatly next to each toilet. Well, at least the little squares were there. In many parts of Moscow and all around the Soviet Union, there were no little squares even of *Pravda*. I mean, everyone quickly learned to bring their own Kleenex or toilet paper in their pocket or purse when they went out traveling. And so, little things like that made you realize that this place was maybe not the industrial giant it was cracked up to be.

It was not easy to just travel freely in those days. We diplomats had to submit a diplomatic note if we wanted to go further than, as I recall, 25 kilometers from the center of Moscow. Because of détente, there had been a tiny liberalization in this travel regime. If you didn't get a negative answer to your dip note back from the Soviet travel people, you had permission to go. This actually did make travel easier although sometimes not. Sharon once took a five or six hour plane ride out to Akademgorodok to deliver some mail to a couple of American scientists out there. When the plane landed a guard armed with a sub-machine gun came on board and told her to stay in her seat. Everyone else got off and then the guard said that she did not, in fact, have permission to make this trip and that she would have to return to Moscow. The plane then returned to Moscow with her on board as the sole passenger. Admittedly this didn't happen very often.

There were a couple of spots near Moscow including one nice stretch of river bank which were available to the diplomats for recreation. The Embassy maintained an old dacha and grounds within the travel circle, and there were a couple of other spots available for picnicking. Except for our dacha, we found these places depressing because Soviets were excluded and we tended to avoid them. In short, one felt very hemmed in by the Soviet travel restrictions.

Because of the restrictive nature of Soviet society, Sharon and I had very few relationships that approached friendship. Sharon had more than I did because of her work in the field of exchanges and of culture but even then, we careful about who we invited to our apartment. In the three years that we were there I don't suppose we entertained more than a handful of Soviets. I think the only Soviet that we had a real friendship with was a young radio announcer for what was called Radio Peace and Progress. It was kind of the Soviet equivalent of RFE or RL and technically was separate from the Soviet government. But I found out through him that when he lined up to get his pay, he got it from the same people that paid the employees of the ordinary state radio, so it was all just kind of a sham. I met him at one of the seemingly constant parties thrown by the young African diplomats. He was there because he was one of the broadcasters in English and Swahili over Radio Peace and Progress. And somehow we got to know each other. We'd be invited to the same parties and we enjoyed talking to each other. Sharon and I gave parties too, and we invited him over a couple of times. That turned out to be a mistake. For him, getting close to my wife and me was an unauthorized relationship. Because of

his work, he was allowed, even encouraged, to have a relationship with the African diplomats and to go to their apartments and parties but he wasn't allowed to have a relationship with American diplomats. So at first his boss was warned by the KGB that this fellow was seeing me, an American diplomat, and that this was not desirable. His boss, who seemed like a decent person, although I never met him, was told to tell my friend to back away from this relationship with the Americans. He didn't back off. Then my friend was called in and asked whether or not he liked his job. If he wanted to keep it, he should back off. Nonetheless he kept our friendship going and then he was told something like, "The next step for you could be prison but what we probably will do with you is just send you out into exile somewhere 'beyond the mountains', as we say, and you can think about your sins out there. You will not be coming back to Moscow the rest of your life and so, if that is what you want, just go and see this American diplomat once again." So at that point he decided he would have to break it off. And I remember very vividly the last time he came to our apartment. He was crying; this grown man was crying. He came just in order to say goodbye to us, and it was a very sad business. He was visibly unhappy, was crying, thought he lived in a lousy system, and what kind of a place was this where you couldn't have a normal relationship with a foreigner. I forget how we had come together for that last meeting, but I remember distinctly driving him back to a place near his apartment in the early morning, it was like 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning after a night of drinking and crying in our apartment. I actually had him hide in the space between the rear seat and the front seat of the car so he wouldn't be seen by the building guards at the exit from our apartment parking lot—probably I brought him in the same way, I don't remember—and then I drove in a kind of a roundabout way through town and dropped him off quickly at a metro stop where he scurried down into the metro and went on his way. I never saw him again, but I heard from my African friends that he had been removed from the radio station and was working as a translator for fishing talks between the Soviet Union and West African coastal countries. That was the kind of a place that it was, even under Brezhnev.

There is an ironic twist to that story. At that time there was an American government program in which officers could buy books to give to Soviet acquaintances and you could get reimbursed for it by one of the information agency officers. I did this fairly often. Well, at one time my friend told me that his sister, who didn't live in Moscow, was studying the works of the American author Thomas Wolfe, the North Carolina Thomas Wolfe, and how hard it was for her to do her graduate work because all his books were in the "closed collection" and she had to get a pass signed and stamped in order to go into the closed collection. She could read the books there, take notes and then leave the books there, but she couldn't take the books out. Of course, this was a hellishly slow process for someone trying to write a dissertation. And I said, "Oh, we can fix that." So I bought him every paperback Thomas Wolfe novel available—it made a handsome, heavy, big box of books—and handed them over to him. He was absolutely delighted and, of course, his sister was more than delighted. Then I went to get my money back from the information agency's book procurement person, and this snotty woman, I will never forget it, sent me a note back saying, "We are unable to reimburse you for these books because Thomas Wolfe does not present a positive picture of American life." Isn't that ironic? And in the Soviet Union, too. Bureaucracy everywhere.

Q: That pretty well wipes out a whole generation of writers. I mean, you know, Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald.

MILES: Or Mark Twain. I mean, good lord, I'm not quite sure who you'd have left if that's your criterion.

Q: Did you have any particular problems with harassment by the KGB or anything?

MILES: Not really. Once I was held under—I don't know what you'd call it—office arrest, I guess. It was innocent and, in retrospect, was kind of funny. Sharon and I were fairly active in getting around in Moscow. I enjoyed the hell out of it; I just thought it was a wonderful thing to be an American diplomat in the Soviet Union. Anyhow, I had an appointment. I was successful in getting an appointment over at the Soviet bureaucratic equivalent of USAID—GKES, they called it, *Gosudarstvenniy Komitet po Vneshnim Ekonomicheskim Svyazyam*, or the State Committee for Foreign Economic Ties. It covered a building about the size of the Pentagon. I mean, it was an enormous building and no American that I knew had ever been over there before. So I went to where I thought I was supposed to go. The drivers didn't know either. They had never taken an American there so they didn't know which entrance I should use. So I went to this enormous two block square building, went in one of the entrances and the guard there—you had to announce who you were to the guards at all these official buildings, show him your pass and say who you were there to see and so on. Well, in this case, the guard looked at me like I had crawled out from under a rock. He was armed, of course, and he said, "Sit here!" Then he began a long series of phone calls. Meanwhile I kept noticing my African and Middle Eastern and some Latin American military friends from the various embassies come strolling in wearing their uniforms and looking at me very strangely like, "What are you doing here?" And then I found out—I really didn't know—that there were two halves of GKES, this Soviet aid organization. There was the civilian half and then there was the military half. Needless to say, I was in the military half and I was definitely not supposed to be there. So the poor civilian bureaucrat that I was supposed to be meeting had to come all the way around the outside of the building—I guess there wasn't a connection between the two halves of the building inside. He had to come all the way out and around the building to get me. He was a little bit pissed off because he thought I had done this deliberately. Anyhow, he escorted me back around to his side of the building where we had a fairly short and uncomfortable conversation. I hope that poor fellow didn't get demoted for my mistake but, still, this was kind of funny.

But no, I personally wasn't bothered or harassed much. Others were; some severely so. At that time, you'd have to call the Soviet Union a police state. I mean, it wasn't terrible like the times of the political trials in the '30s, '40s and'50s. That period of severe repression had ended. But the KGB and the other police and "competent organs", as they called themselves, did keep an eye on things. They had so many people and they were so fearful of contact between Soviet citizens and foreigners that you kept running into them. Sharon worked in the cultural affairs section, and she would be out with poets and jazz

musicians, free spirits who in those balmy days of détente were not so concerned about the police and their contacts, and she was constantly being hustled out of an apartment or a, I wouldn't call it a nightclub, but a club or some equivalent because they had heard that the police were on their way to check IDs and it would be better for everyone if she were not there.

And then I remember one incident with our son Richard. He was then about 12 years old, I guess, and he had developed a good friendship with a number of Soviet boys and maybe some girls too but mostly young boys, because when we first were assigned to our apartment we were in the middle building of three identical, brand new buildings. They were 16 story buildings, probably with 40 or 50 apartments in each building. Foreigners and diplomats mostly were in the middle building, but in the other two buildings there were Soviet managerial types, military officers, upper middle class people by their standards, which is sort of where we would fit in. And because the buildings were new when we moved in, the parking lot was not finished and they hadn't completed the fence around our building yet—a fence designed to keep people out. So, children being children, the kids proceeded to make friends without regard for citizenship and so on. From Norway and Belgrade, our son had learned that one way to make friends was to take his Matchbox cars outside and just begin playing with them. For the other young boys in the neighborhood, this was like exposing flowers to bees. The process did play hell with his Matchbox collection since the cars tended to disappear, but it was a good way to make friends. Russians are inherently friendly and hospitable people and Richard would be invited up to the Soviet kids' apartments for tea or soup or whatever and we didn't try to interfere with any of that. We didn't try to exploit it; we didn't try to interfere with it. So he quickly developed a number of friends and they had a lot of fun together, including some weird Soviet-type experiences. He told me once later, I didn't know it at that time, but some drunks who were sitting outside one of the nearby apartment buildings to play chess and drink decided to build a fire. Then they put an old door on top of the bonfire and would lift the little boys up and have them dance on top of the door. I'm glad I didn't know anything about that at the time.

But one incident that I did know about was this. Some of the boys had been used to coming into our building, and a couple of them had been up in our apartment, so they continued trying to do it even after the fence went up. They would climb over the fence or under the fence or through the fence or whatever, and they would come on in. The police, the KGB basically, who stood guard in front of our apartment building, kept trying to chase them out and would talk to their parents to keep them out of the building where the foreigners lived. And so at one point the police actually conducted a little boy raid. They blocked the doors and conducted a kind of raid through the stairwell and the hallways of the building. They rounded up about 10 or 12 of these little boys and took them off to the police station. Then they systematically called their parents, one after the other, to come down and pick up their kid and get a lecture about keeping their kids away from these foreigners. By then our son spoke fairly decent Russian; I mean, he learned it all from these Russian kids so it sounded Russian. Well, they finally got around to him and they said, "Where does your papa work?" And of course he was scared out of his wits; he said his father worked at the American Embassy. The cop probably thought, "Uh,

oh! Somebody's going to get it for sure!" And then he said, "Well, what does he do?"—thinking he was one of the Soviet local employees of the Embassy. And our son said, "I don't know; he's a diplomat." Oh boy! All of a sudden they sat him on the desk; they went out and bought him ice cream; they asked if there was anything he needed; they drove him home. And they asked him if he would please not tell anybody about it. Of course he did tell us, but they had treated him very well; there was no rough stuff or anything so we never raised any fuss about it. But that just shows you the extent to which contact with foreigners was controlled.

There is another amusing story involving our children and their close relationship with Soviet society. Moscow was so safe in those days that we let our kids ride the public transportation all around the city. The trolleybus that connected the Chancery and our house ran by Gorky Park and our children would often get off there and explore the park. Our son Richard became friends with the fellow who ran what we would call the bumper car concession. Now in Moscow, people didn't bump into the other cars during their ride; they just drove around clockwise in a big circle. Anyhow, the concession manager let our son stay on the public address system and call out every few minutes, "*Na levo, na levo, tovarishchi, na levo*!" Imagine! The son of an American diplomat urging the good Soviet citizenry and their children to "Stay to the left, comrades, stay to the left!" This was our son's first "job" and, even though he was only paid in "*ponchiki*" [Russian donuts], he was very proud of his job.

Here's one more story. Embassy officers used to go to these Znaniye [Knowledge] Society lectures. These were held frequently and what they were was a public meeting in a public building. There would be an announced speaker on a particular topic. All sorts of different people would give these lectures: sometimes someone from the Central Committee apparatus, sometimes a professor from a university, or maybe someone who had just written a book or had come back from living in Ethiopia or Somalia or some place. He or she would talk about it and then would answer questions from the audience. Since these lectures and especially the follow-on question and answer sessions gave us a rare glimpse into Soviet public opinion, someone from the American Embassy would try to attend each one of these lectures. We didn't ask questions; we tried to be very quiet and discreet. After the lecture, people would write their questions on a piece of paper and pass them up front where a moderator would select those that the speaker would then try to answer. Sometimes the questions were quite blunt, even provocative, and sometimes the speaker would answer in an equally blunt way. Sometimes the moderator, who was, after all, a Party official, would look at the slip of paper and say, "Comrades, this is a very provocative question and not suitable for this forum," and he would toss it aside, wouldn't even read it out loud and so you thought, "What the hell was that? I would love to know what that was." But anyhow, it was the closest thing in the Soviet Union to a public forum, so we would sit there and take notes of these questions and answers, and they always made an interesting cable.

I was sitting there one evening at the main building used by the Moscow Znaniye Society, which, incongruously or maybe deliberately, was located cater-corner from the KGB headquarters, the famous Lubyanka building. There were maybe 200 people in the hall.

People would be assigned to come to these lectures from their apartment building, their block area, or they would be assigned to come from the organization or from the factory shop where they worked. They were supposed to take notes and report back to the organization which had sent them in the first place. It was part of the required political work that everybody had to do from time to time. Well anyhow, I was sitting there taking my notes and this young kid sitting next to me, he was probably 16, 17 years old, was just fascinated with what I was doing. I don't know, maybe he just realized I was a foreigner, dressed like a foreigner or whatever, and so at the end of the event he asked if I were a Russian? And I said, "No, I'm not. I'm a foreigner." And he asked, "Well what kind of a foreigner? Where are you from?" And I said, "I'm American." And he asked, "What are you doing here?" Not hostile but just curious. Anyhow, there was no secret to it. I said, "I'm from the American Embassy. We attend these affairs and I'm interested in what's going on in your country." So he said, "I am really interested in America. Can we go somewhere and talk?" I said I really didn't think it was a good idea for him to do that: his teachers and his parents wouldn't like it and the authorities wouldn't like it. He said, "No, no, it's okay, times have changed, and it's not like the old days." I said, "Well, in many ways it's still like the old days and, no, I'm not going to go and talk to you somewhere." Then he asked, "How are you going home?" I said that I would take the trolleybus and he said, "Can I get on the bus with you and ride to your home? We can talk on the bus." And I said, "Well, I can't prevent you getting on the bus if you want to do so." So he did and we had a fairly good chat. He was just curious: how much does a worker make in the United States? Does everybody have a car? What does a car cost? Can you have a cow? You know, that kind of thing.

And then we got to where I was going, to where I lived, and I said, "Now I'm going to say goodbye to you here and thank you for the conversation." I never did tell him my name. And anyhow, he said, "Can I come up and see your apartment? I would really like to see an American apartment." And I said, "Look, I hate to be the one to tell you these things but you don't live in a society in which this is tolerated. This kind of curiosity is just going to get you in trouble. I'm sorry but, no, I'm not going to take you in and show you my apartment." He got very upset and said, "You don't understand our society. We are changing; we are not like we used to be." I said, "I'm sorry. I think I do know enough about your society to know that this would not be good for you and, no, I'm not going to do it." Well, that was not a very happy encounter. So you kept having experiences like that all the time in the Soviet Union. Restaurants and trains were just about the only places where you could have a conversation with an ordinary citizen. That was because everyone knew that these were chance encounters and most unlikely ever to be repeated.

Now, people who were trying to ferret out state secrets, like our defense attachés or whatever, or the people who were doing the internal affairs work, where they were in touch with the so-called "*otkazniki*" or refuseniks or the dissidents and so on, they were harassed a lot by the authorities. I mean, to the point of people breaking in, well, entering their apartments and making sure they knew that they had been entered, using the toilet and not flushing it or leaving a cigarette butt in an ash tray or even in a cup and saucer of coffee which they had made for themselves. They just wanted our people to know that they were there. But that kind of a thing, well I don't doubt for a minute that our

apartment was searched periodically, the telephones tapped and all that. We assumed all that and it just didn't bother us a whole lot. This was the Soviet Union, after all. But while other people in the Embassy absolutely were harassed, we were not. Because we knew that the apartment was bugged, we had to warn our children not to talk openly about their Russian friends—to call them by name or to mention what their parents did for a living—to protect their friends from getting into trouble with the Soviet authorities. That was a real hardship because we, like most American parents, wanted our children to share their experiences with us and to be open about discussing their activities.

This was also the time when the Soviets bombarded the Embassy with microwaves and we and others in the Embassy were rather concerned about that. The microwaving of the Embassy had been going on for several years but it became public knowledge only while I was still at Garmisch. There were two of us who were going on to Moscow from Garmisch: Marilyn Johnson, a senior USIA officer, and me. The Department gave us the option of backing out of the assignment if we wanted to, but neither of us wanted to do that: we both wanted to go on to Moscow. Sharon wasn't happy about it, but she went along with it and so we did go to Moscow. I don't think our family ever suffered any health problems as a result of the microwaving that was still going on, but there was a big fuss in the State Department about this because a lot of people—particularly pregnant women—felt that their health was impaired by that microwaving and even Ambassador Stoessel's health was felt by many to be impaired by the microwaving. When the Johns Hopkins study, which the State Department paid for, came out and in essence said there was no real evidence of a direct link between the microwaving, which definitely had gone on, and the health problems, which definitely had occurred, there was great skepticism among the Moscow Embassy veterans. I'm skeptical about this study myself, to be blunt. Sharon and I attend an annual reunion of people who were in the Embassy at the time of the big fire there. At this gathering people still talk about the health problems which they firmly believe were caused or at least exacerbated by the microwaving.

Q: At the time you had left, how had things developed with American-Soviet relations?

MILES: Well, by 1979, things had begun to deteriorate. I can't point to any one thing that would provide clear evidence of the deterioration of the relationship or even a cause of the deterioration but, with hindsight, you can see that the impending invasion of Afghanistan was a major factor. As you remember, the Soviets went into Afghanistan in a big way in December of '79, five or six months after I left, but the turmoil in Afghanistan was such that we all felt that there was an increasing possibility of Soviet military intervention long before that. Actually, in the Embassy in Moscow, we didn't think that way at first and we used to have stiff arguments about it with our colleagues in the American Embassy in Kabul. But by mid-1979, when the objective situation in Afghanistan was seriously beginning to change for the worse and when you could see that the Soviets were increasingly concerned, the chances for intervention had clearly increased rather than decreased. Up until 1979 or thereabouts, Embassy Moscow felt that the Soviets probably would not intervene because it would destroy détente, which was very important to the Soviets and because intervention carried certain risks. Any military adventure of that sort carries its risk, as we know—or should know. It does seem to be a

difficult lesson to learn, doesn't it? Embassy Kabul had been saying all along, "Well, that all may be true, but we see the signs here of serious and worsening internal difficulties and commensurate Soviet concern and we rate the probability of intervention as high." The Soviets had already sold some armor and other equipment to Afghanistan; they had quite a few military advisors there, plus there was the fact that Afghanistan was on the Soviet border. The significance of that last point also seems to be something that Washington policy makers have a very hard time absorbing. So without being able to say that Embassy Moscow saw this clearly in, let's say, 1978, we did come around in 1979. So the Soviet invasion in December 1979 was probably not a great surprise. And we were right about one thing. The invasion certainly tore détente in half and it never really recovered after that.

Q: You were in Moscow, I believe, when Spike Dubs was killed.

MILES: That's right. Yes, I was.

Q: Of course Spike had been a Soviet hand.

MILES: And my predecessor in my job in Embassy Moscow was down there with him in Kabul, although, happily, not in the hotel room where Ambassador Dubs was killed.

Q: And I heard talk through interviews that many people point a very firm finger towards the KGB as far as the killing goes.

MILES: I've read several accounts of that incident and they perhaps could have restrained the Afghan authorities from all that shooting and saved his life. I mean, they were shooting into a closed room so—

Q: Yes, but also that he was shot by what appeared to be a Soviet weapon. But you know who knows? But the point being, while you were there, what was the—was there any sort of supposition about the killing of Spike? Why he was killed?

MILES: Well, of course, Soviet weaponry is all over the world. I wouldn't read anything into that. And certainly the Soviets supplied the Afghans with weapons. But, no, I don't recall much speculation about the Ambassador's death. We did wonder whether it was a deliberate act or a bad accident or just recklessness on the part of the KGB or GRU or whoever was working with their Afghan friends. Anyhow, I'm not aware of any inside information that would indicate Soviet complicity in his murder or death.

Q: Well now, Dick, you went in the summer of '79. Where did you go?

MILES: I went back to Washington.

Q: To do what?

MILES: I was the Yugoslav desk officer, '79 to '81, in the State Department.

Q: When you got there, how stood relations with Yugoslavia?

MILES: They were okay. Larry Eagleburger was the Ambassador, which was an experience in itself, being desk officer with Eagleburger out there. He was and still is a real force of nature. I learned a great deal from Eagleburger. He came back to Washington often and I would pick him up at the airport in my car, drive him in. I can't imagine desk officers doing that kind of thing nowadays but I did it. I would say relations were good, actually, at that time. We had a rather close military relationship with them. That military relationship with Yugoslavia had its ups and downs over the decades going back to 1948, you know, when we first—I don't know when we first started doing it, 1949, 1950 maybe—began training pilots in Texas and all that.

Q: Yes, I remember seeing Sabre jets, F-86s, sitting on the tarmac at the airport in Belgrade.

MILES: Yes. It was a pretty amazing thing. In the airplane museum out at the Belgrade Airport, there was a P-47 Thunderbolt, a World War II fighter plane that we had given to the Yugoslavs during that period of intense military cooperation in the late 40s. I hope we didn't destroy it during the Kosovo bombing campaign. In the 1970s we were again selling a lot of military equipment to the Yugoslavs. This was mostly defensive in nature, radars and so on, although the line between defensive and offensive is often in the eye of the beholder. I remember we were selling them Maverick air to air missiles and you would certainly believe that to be an offensive weapon if one hit a plane you were piloting. We were also working with them on the various issues of Yugoslav terrorism. There was a lot of radical émigré activity directed against the Yugoslav state and there was a certain amount of skullduggery on the part of the Yugoslav state apparatus against these émigrés, especially in Europe but including in the United States; so that was always a complicated issue. Anyhow, it was a very active relationship and one that kept us all on our toes. There was a lot of financial activity but I didn't do the financial stuff in the Eastern European Office at that time. We had a regional economic affairs officer, Bob Bradtke, who is still in the State Department, and Bob spent a lot of time on Yugoslav financial matters because we were trying to help, along with the IMF and the other international financial institutions, to keep the Yugoslav economy moving along. And it was moving along rather nicely, you remember; they were doing alright, actually.

Q: You said that Larry Eagleburger was sort of a force of nature. How was he different from other ambassadors?

MILES: Oh, yes. It's hard to describe where he derives his authority. For example, where does his authority come from as opposed to that of any other ambassador? He's bright, of course. He was an aide to Kissinger and so he had connections. But a lot of people in the Foreign Service are bright and have connections and yet Eagleburger always stood out and still stands out, even in retirement and in not very good health. I mean, he's just one of our special people in the State Department.

Well, he has a strong personality. He's not a, what's the phrase, a shrinking violet. He's personable. He's not arrogant or something of a bully like some other superstars that I know. He's a very decent person. He enjoys what he's doing. With some of the big shots, you get the impression they're sitting on a sharp tack all the time and you kind of wonder why in God's name are they doing this if it upsets them so much?

I can remember one fellow quite high up in the Department hierarchy who would break out in hives due to the stress of the pressure that he was under. And people in this profession are often under a lot of pressure, no question about it; but like, "Why are you torturing yourself?" I often felt like saying, "Why don't you go buy a house in the country and raise cabbages or something? No one is making you do this work." Anyhow, Eagleburger thoroughly enjoyed what he was doing and he would joke about it. I have often heard him say to visitors out in Belgrade, that this Ambassador stuff beats working for a living. You could see that he just got a kick out of it. And, as Ambassador, he used all the tools that he had available—assistance programs, exchange programs, military to military relations, taking advantage of visitors and friends in high places, not to mention what is now fashionably called public diplomacy—simply making statements or interviews or whatever to try to advance the interests of the United States as he best he could. He was really excellent at—and this is something I learned from him and have successfully used many times as ambassador—delivering unpalatable messages without destroying his ability to continue good relations with his interlocutor or with the host government.

There was no significant crisis in U.S.-Yugoslav relations at that time. Of course, the big event which occurred was the death of Tito in 1980 but, important as it was, this was not a crisis event even for the Yugoslavs. Naturally, we had problems. There was constant wrangling over the nuclear reactor that Westinghouse was constructing near the border between Slovenia and Croatia. There were problems of intrusion into Yugoslav air space by naval aircraft from elements of the Sixth Fleet deployed to the Adriatic. The Yugoslavs would get very excited about that and jump up and down. We would try to calm them down.

There were problems with these anti-Yugoslav émigrés I mentioned to you infiltrating into Yugoslavia and trying to blow up bridges or simply trying to spoil things in Croatia so that the tourist numbers would decline, the economy would suffer and so on. Some of these overzealous nationalists came from the United States. It seems axiomatic that nationalism increases in direct proportion to the distance from the mother country. But these were relatively minor things; there was no one big thing that really stood out during the two years that I was desk officer, with the exception, the major exception, of the death of Tito.

Q: I was going to say, how did we view Tito at the time and his succession?

MILES: Well, we had had our ups and downs with Tito but on balance Tito commanded a certain respect in Washington. His bloodier days were behind him so that occasionally you might find someone locked up in jail, like Milovan Djilas, but they would not have

their head whacked off and might, eventually, be freed. And I think there were some anti-I hate to call them anti-communists but anti-Yugoslav government types around, including in the U.S. Congress, and including in our military, who just could not abide the idea of a decent relationship with a communist government, no matter how benign. But the more sensible power brokers in Washington and elsewhere had developed a measure of respect for Tito. The belief was that, on balance, he was doing a pretty good job of trying to bring the country into the 20th century. And in fact most of us who had anything to do with the communist world, at least the people I knew and worked with, felt that if the communist world were to evolve in a more humane manner, Yugoslavia might serve as a model for what that world might become. No one, bar none, predicted the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union. And so we were interested in Yugoslavia as kind of a model which others might follow. And, frankly, because its style of government, its openness to western ideas, tourism and business gave the Soviets conniption fits—it was kind of fun to be able to play on that. So when American ships would pull into a Yugoslav port we always got a hell of a big kick out of that and the Russians would get excited about it. But it was very interesting: the Yugoslavs kept their balance sheets and so the exact same number of Soviet ships would pull into a Yugoslav port as the number of American ships that pulled in but they couldn't quite match things like our aircraft carriers or the salaries of our servicemen while on liberty so even if the numbers were the same, the quality was very different.

Q: Well, did we—

MILES: There was a considerable perturbation, if that's the word, when Tito fell ill and when it appeared he was going to die. So we dusted off—I did it myself—the contingency planning books, which were eight or ten inches thick, going over every conceivable possible scenario, everything from Soviet military intervention down to total dissolution of the country and uncontrolled civil conflict or something like that and what we might do in this case, what we would do in that case, and we revised all that during the lengthy period of Tito's illness. I spent an awful lot of time organizing and attending meetings by my bosses, inter-agency meetings, to discuss all these things or sometimes having meetings of my own to discuss them at a working level. And I think on balance our planning and our assessments held up pretty well.

In fact, just a month or two ago, I attended a very interesting conference put on over at the Kennan Institute and sponsored by the U.S. Institute of Peace and another think tank, I can't remember which one exactly. What they did was—it was quite interesting really—they took the key cables from the Embassy and the classified intelligence evaluations, the SNIEs [Special National Intelligence Estimate], the official analyses of the intelligence community that had been collected from about 1948 through about 1985 or something like that, and they had them declassified. I don't know how they managed this but things which were secret and sensitive and all that, they were all declassified. And then they lined up a seminar group of maybe 25 or 30 people who had worked on Yugoslav issues for the State Department, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, some of the academicians and some Yugoslavs. They even had some former Yugoslav diplomats and they brought in Pavle Jevremovic, an old and good friend, who had just

been assigned as the Serbian Ambassador to the UN, and we all sat around for an entire day and discussed these documents: how well were they constructed; what did they look like with the enormous hindsight that we are now able to apply to them; were there things that we saw correctly; were there things that we had missed or not seen correctly. And, you know, the documents held up quite well. It was really interesting to see these documents again, especially those that I had a hand in working on more than twenty-five years ago. That was an amazing exercise and one that we really ought to do much more often.

Q: While you were on the Yugoslav desk, was there much reporting on the Serb-Bosnian-Kosovar—I mean, you know, the ethnic divisions, the possibilities of things really breaking? How did we feel?

MILES: Well, you know yourself, anyone who has ever been in Yugoslavia, modern Yugoslavia, becomes aware of the fault lines in the society: Croats and Serbs, Bosnia fractured in many ways, Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, even Serbs and Macedonians. I mean, there were fault lines all over the place. And so the Embassy, as the Embassy had been doing since, I suppose, at least since the split with Stalin in 1948, paid careful attention to these issues and reported on them. We did keep a very watchful eye on these things. We did tend to see the major fault line as being between Croatia and Serbia and we underestimated the difficulties in Bosnia by a long shot.

However, we did spend a good deal of time on Kosovar Albanian practices and policies and on the Serb or the Yugoslav response. At that time there were some significant protest demonstrations. People would block a road or something of that sort but, at that time, the Kosovar Albanians still had their own governmental structure; they still had their parliament; they were subject to the Yugoslav state, of course; and, in fact, they were deriving a certain amount of income from the government's Fund for the Underdeveloped Regions, but still there was unrest. And we were all aware of the sensitivity of these issues and of the need to keep an eye on them. Yes, definitely.

Q: You were there at the death of Tito?

MILES: Yes, in Washington.

Q: Yes. How did we view this succession of Tito, the solution perhaps?

MILES: I think we felt—and the intelligence documents that I just reread back this up—that Yugoslavia would have a hard time hanging together after the death of Tito, but there was a general consensus that we could expect a period of ten to fifteen years before the centrifugal strains would begin to tear the country apart. Now, frankly, ten to fifteen years is about as far as any human being can see into the future anyhow. And that prediction proved fairly accurate. Tito died in 1980 and Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in the early 1990s.

Q: I know when I was there one of the overriding considerations for keeping Yugoslavia together was the Soviets. Yugoslavia, next to Berlin, seemed a place where we could end up in conflict if things went wrong, and of course Yugoslavia didn't actually break up until the Soviet Union broke up.

MILES: Yes, we did worry about that and we discussed our options. It was not dissimilar to the analogous situation I described earlier with regard to Iran after the ousting of the Shah. In other words, what might we do in the case of great instability in Yugoslavia? What were the likely fault lines? Should we support one putative faction or another? Should we offer supplies or assistance? Should we intervene in some way? And if we did those things what would the Soviets do? Or if the Soviets did those things first, what should we do in response? That's why the book, the Yugoslav contingency book, was a foot thick—because it went into all the intricacies of who might do what to whom, and what should we do in response, and looking at it from at least the two sides of the United States and the Soviet Union.

And so there was concern about it but there was a also general feeling that nothing dramatic would happen—that given that particular, historic moment, the Soviets would not intervene or even move quickly to support any particular faction. The Yugoslav successor leadership, as it was at that time, would not try to turn to the Soviet Union for assistance or help, and therefore the best thing for the United States to do was to lay low, continue our economic and military support, express our desire that Yugoslavia remain together as an integral state and wait to see what would happen. And that turned out to be a wise policy, I think. In fact this weird rotational government that they set up did actually work for 10 or 12 years, and it might have worked forever if Milosevic and Tudjman had not themselves pretty much decided that there was more to be gained by tearing it apart than by maintaining it.

Q: Yes. Well, so we are up through '81 about? Or where are we now?

MILES: Tito died in 1980 and then I left the Desk in 1981. With Tito's funeral, of course, that was an interesting thing in itself. Former New York Governor Averell Harriman was selected to be the U.S. representative. He had become a bit deaf and of course Tito's death took five or six months to play out. Over that time period, I had many conversations with Governor Harriman, none of them very substantive. We were in touch with Dr. Michael DeBakey, who was seeing to Tito, along with some other foreign doctors. Tito had Russian doctors there, he had German doctors, he had some American doctors, but Dr. DeBakey was the one who kept us informed of what he thought was happening with Tito as the doctors tried to prolong his life.

Governor Harriman lived in Washington but he liked to go and spend the weekends at his home out in the Virginia horse country. So usually every Friday afternoon or Saturday morning, I'd get a call and would be told that "The Governor" was on the line and he'd shout, "Dick, Dick!" He'd shout because he thought, you know, everyone shouted at him to be heard so he had to shout back, "Dick, is Tito dead yet? Is he going to die this weekend?" And I'd shout back—my kids got a big kick out of it when they would hear

me shouting over the telephone on Saturday mornings at home; it became kind of a family joke. "No, Governor, he's still alive. I don't think he's going to die this weekend. It's probably okay to go!" That's the way we went through several months, really. And then finally he did die. So we got the group together. Jimmy Carter was President then so the President's mother went out with the funeral party to represent him and that caused a little bit of a mini scandal because she showed up at the funeral in a white dress. Yugoslavs still talk about it because one is expected to wear black at a Yugoslav funeral.

Q: This is tape four, side one, with Dick Miles.

Yes. You were saying Miss Lillian—

MILES: So Lillian Carter went out as the President's personal representative and as his mother, you know, she could carry that off. And wore a white dress on the airplane. Now we had been assured by Yugoslav protocol that there would be time for the funeral party to go to their hotel and change clothes and freshen up and then go view the body and pay their respects. But instead, in good Yugoslav fashion, the protocol people decided to drop that agreed upon plan and they took them straight from the airplane to the funeral. So that's why Lillian Carter showed up in a white dress. It was no fault of hers.

Q: Well then, when you left the Yugoslav desk what did you do?

MILES: Then I did two years in the Politico-Military Bureau in what was then called the Office of Regional Security Affairs, PM/RSA.

Q: This would be '81 to—?

MILES: Eighty-one to '83.

Q: What particular piece of the political-military pie did you have?

MILES: I was one of two deputies in the office. Richard Haass was the Office Director. Richard was a political appointee, which was a little bit unusual. In the Reagan administration, political appointees were inserted into the structure down to the level even of office directors. And Richard Burt, formerly with the *New York Times*, was the head of the bureau, the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs and, let me see, Bob Blackwill was his chief deputy; he had several deputies and Bob Blackwill was one. The late Arnie Raphel was one. Les Brown was another. So it was a pretty high-powered crew. Burt is still an active consultant in international business. Bob Blackwill still does special envoy missions when he's not up at the JFK School at Harvard. And Richard Haass is the head of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. So these were all smart and ambitious people. The Reagan administration was getting heavily involved in Central American affairs at that time, sometimes telling people about it, sometimes not, and so there were a lot of things going on. Wheels within wheels, sometimes. And the bureau itself was rather complicated. There was a certain amount of deliberate duplication of effort so that the office I was in overlapped, in a way, with another office, the exact name of which

escapes me but which was run by Richard Clarke, who has gone on to even greater fame as a counterterrorism expert. That office had some very bright young fellows in it: Rand Beers, who broke with the [George W.] Bush administration in a way; Charles Duelfer and Arnie Kanter—all distinguished people.

Q: Raphel?

MILES: No, no. Arnie Raphel was one of the deputies in the bureau. Come to think of it, he may have come on board after Rick Burt left. Rick Burt was there for one year and then moved over to head the European Bureau and was replaced by Admiral Howe, Jonathan Howe, a serving Navy admiral. When Burt left, he took Richard Haass with him. That left me as Acting Director of the office and I remained Acting Director for the whole year, which was good for me in a way because I was operating at about two ranks above my own personal rank and it helped me to move along in the Foreign Service. Also it was much easier working with Admiral Howe and Les Brown than with Burt, Blackwill and Haass—a very different set of people, much less driven, much less secretive, not interested in setting two different shops to work on the same problem, not at all given to grandiose, "Let's change the world" scenarios.

In PM/RSA we coordinated the political-military aspects of U.S. policy, and I'll explain what that means. Geographically, we dealt with the entire world with the major exception of Europe, which basically was considered a NATO matter and had its own shop in the European Bureau. Nor did we do either the Soviet Union or communist China. And—another exception, I suppose—we didn't do nuclear issues. PM had a different office for that. So when the American military wanted to do a joint maneuver with Morocco, for example, we would be the ones to coordinate the necessary messages to the Embassy there, have the Ambassador or whoever go in and obtain the permission from the Moroccan authorities to make this happen. Or if we wanted to extend—these are real examples I'm using, not imaginary—if we wanted to harden and extend a runway in one of the Central American countries for possible use by our military aircraft, we would be the ones—the Pentagon would tell us what they wanted—and we were the ones who would work with the appropriate geographic bureau in the Department and with the American Embassy in question to obtain the political permission from the appropriate country which would enable the U.S. military to do what they wanted. And of course this required coordination with the National Security Council and you had to be sure that what you were being asked by the Pentagon was a legitimate request and one which was approved by the National Command authorities and not just something which, say, the Commander of the Southern Command might happen to want. So there had to be a certain amount of coordination and the way we obtained that coordination was really quite interesting.

I had about 15 people in the office, roughly one-third Foreign Service officers, one-third serving military officers all pretty much at the level of 06, which is colonel or Navy captain, and from all the services—Marines, Army, Air Force, Navy and, at one point, even a Coast Guard officer—and then one-third GS [General Services] people, technical people, experts on this or that. And so it made quite an interesting mix. But, boy, the

reading that you were required to do was astronomical, because you were receiving not just the narrow political-military cables but virtually all cables involving the political situation, the economic situation, the social situation in every country in the world in which the U.S. military had an interest, which is to say almost all of them. And so every morning there would be a stack of paper towering over your head, I mean quite literally, several feet high. Remember, this was the pre-computer age so everything had to be printed out. And I remember Richard Haass, my boss, was stunned by the amount of stuff he was given to read—OK, he was a fast reader, but he was stunned by the amount of material that came in. So he said that he was only going to read the LIMDIS [Limited Distribution], the EXDIS [Executive Distribution] and the NODIS [No Distribution] cables. The NODIS cables couldn't be copied and were to be read only out of a closed file in the Front Office. For everything else he depended on the rest of us to sort out. If we spotted something especially interesting, we were to show it to him. So we divided the world up among all these officers. At first I tried hard to read everything. I'm a fast reader myself, but this proved impossible. No one person could read all that stuff and so this was the first time in my career where I was actually responsible now for other people doing their jobs without my being aware of everything that was going into their analysis and their recommendations. In the military a young shave tail lieutenant gets that experience 24 hours after he takes over his first platoon, but in the State Department you don't get it for years until all of a sudden you are tossed into the deep end of a big swimming pool and you either sink or swim.

Q: You know, looking at this, you must have been up to your, I mean, to put it politely, up to your neck in Iran-Contra, were you? Or not?

MILES: The Reagan White House and even Richard Haass, Rick Burt and Secretary Haig and Secretary Weinberger, they all had—they were all caught up in this "wheels within wheels" approach. I had never seen such a secretive or more manipulative place. Anyhow, this Iran-Contra stuff was above my pay grade I did find out about these strange shenanigans but only later like almost all other Americans.

Q: Did you know about Ollie North? I've heard people say, you know, we're in Lebanon, and this sort of cowboy appeared and was doing things but we didn't know what he was doing. I mean, was he a kind of a cipher or something?

MILES: Well, he was kind of like a gunman riding into a western town on a horse, you know. He'd ride in, shoot the place up and ride out again and you knew who he was but you didn't quite know why he was doing what he was doing or if he had staying power. So none of us really knew how seriously to take him. But, again, he was operating way beyond my level. I have never met the man.

Q: During this time were there any particular countries, areas or issues that particularly stick in your mind or were troublesome or interesting?

MILES: We did a good deal of the coordination for negotiations on overseas base agreements. You know, we have base agreements with Spain, with the Philippines, at least at that time—

Q: And Portugal.

MILES: Yes, Portugal and so on, and they have to be renegotiated every so often. Those complicated negotiations were coordinated out of my office, but there were many other important players, all of whom would be represented on the actual negotiating team. That was interesting work but difficult because it involved a lot of coordination with the NSC and with the Pentagon, with the geographic bureaus in the State Department and, of course, with the countries involved. The Congress was also interested in these arrangements because of the commitments involved and because vast sums of money or assistance were involved. People would get pretty heated about the things that they absolutely had to have in the agreement and yet in order to obtain those things, a price had to be paid and not always by agencies which were actually benefiting from the things they were being asked to pay for. Sometimes you would have to pay such a high price for a particular condition or concession, that some in the U.S. government were not willing to pay and then you would have a real donnybrook. Lots of angry words would be exchanged over, you know, "wussy" State Department people and "extravagant" Department of Defense people and it was sometimes rather difficult to see light at the end of these various tunnels, but we tried to persevere and broker things to everyone's satisfaction.

And then the other thing that stood out in my memory was the whole business of the intervention in Lebanon, because the political-military aspects were, to a large degree, coordinated out of my office. We drafted, well, we helped to draft, the Rules of Engagement [ROE] with the Pentagon. These military officers who worked for me were invaluable in that process. This was really pretty serious stuff. What does a soldier or a unit on patrol do if fired upon? What does a commander do? What do the ships offshore do? It was serious and involved life or death matters. Which other countries were going to be involved in the multilateral force; where were they going to stay; what would be their operational sector; how were they going to coordinate their activities? Some things you could push off to the military commanders to sort out on the spot but other things had to be decided in advance and then Congress had to be consulted, of course, on all this. Now, we, in my office, didn't do the congressional consultations. That was done at a higher level, at the Assistant Secretary or even higher level. But all the other stuff, setting up the multi-national intervention force, that was done out of my office. As a former Marine I still feel a responsibility for being involved in a process which resulted in the death of more than 200 Marines, not to mention all those civilians and others killed in the Beirut Embassy bombing. But all I can say about that is that, after we went in, the Rules of Engagement were changed. You know, when we intervened, the idea was very clear. We went in with the written agreement of all the hostile sides—and there were more than two hostile sides, actually there were 15 as I recall—but anyhow, with the written agreement of all of them. The purpose was to separate the warring sides and to allow breathing space for a political solution. And of course the inevitable happened. Once we

were there, we became more and more involved on the side of the Lebanese government and, ipso facto, we then exposed ourselves to the enmity of the factions in opposition to the government, including some of the stronger factions. And so we wound up being participants in a civil war. And so some very bad things happened to our force on the ground.

One of the other things that we did out of my office, and it was pretty interesting really, was to organize the evacuation of the PLO out of Beirut. You remember the Israelis were pressing into Beirut with some force. Basically they wanted to go in there and kill or capture the PLO leadership and the fighters and we were able—officers working out of my office with our Ambassador to Lebanon and with Special Envoy Phil Habib who was out there as well—to develop the plan of evacuation, get the PLO leadership to agree to it, and then charter the ships to haul everybody away. This was pretty much going on simultaneously with all our efforts to move the Syrian Army out of Beirut. Ambassador Habib later won the Medal of Freedom for his absolutely incredible work. I really loved that little man. I can remember being on the secure phone up in the Department Operations Center with Habib shouting—and cursing: he swore a lot—into his phone, "God damn it, Miles, can't you get someone higher than you to move these bastards off the dime? Can't you hear the mortar shells they're firing right now? Listen to this!" And he would hold the phone out the window and you would hear karump, karump, karump as the rounds went off. Me: "Yes, Ambassador, I hear you. We're doing the best we can." And then Habib, "Well, your 'best you can' isn't good enough, God damn it!" It was quite an experience. This was about as close as you can get to diplomatic activity which can actually save peoples' lives.

Q: I've talked to Bob Dillon, who was the Ambassador to Lebanon at the time, and he was shouting at you too.

MILES: Yes. Well, he was more polite than Phil Habib.

Q: I mean, basically we were trying to get the Israelis to lay off.

MILES: Back off, yes. And let us try to work out an arrangement.

Q: Did you have any connection with the Israelis or did you go to somebody else?

MILES: It was done by the people in the Near Eastern Bureau.

Q: But I mean, you must have felt that they—

MILES: And by Secretary Shultz, who had only recently been appointed Secretary of State.

Q: —they were not really doing very well, were they? I mean, at least the Israelis weren't responding.

MILES: I remember Secretary Shultz having two days of briefings and meetings up in the Operations Center. It was like a movie set. Quite dark in the conference room, no overhead lights, table lamps with green glass shades and set on low—like a scene out of *The Godfather*. Shultz had called in high-level government and security representatives from Lebanon and Israel. Maybe fifteen or so Americans were there at any one time, mostly back benchers like me. The Lebanese were there one day and then the Israelis were there for a day. There were probably lunches, cocktails and so on, but I was too low-ranking for any of that. I don't recall exactly who all was there. I wish I did; I would be able to make it a more interesting story. Bob Ames, the CIA Station Chief who was later killed in the Beirut Embassy bombing, was there. Gave a very impressive briefing.

And I must say, Secretary Shultz was really masterful in hearing people out. He was patient; he would listen to these people while they harangued the other side and then after a bit of that—and I have been in lots of meetings where that kind of thing takes place. After people go through all that and get it out of their systems or say enough to where they can tell their bosses in their home countries that they have done so, then only after that can you begin to get a little more serious about the issues and discuss what might be done or not done in a particular situation. And Secretary Shultz was very good at that; he was very patient, didn't show any annoyance or lose his temper. Rather, he indicated that he had all the time in the world to listen while the Lebanese and Israelis went on and on and on, but he also brought people back to the important points and moved the meeting along. I was really quite impressed with him.

Q: You know, here you are a former Marine and originally the Marines went in, and the international forces, to separate the people, get the PLO off. The PLO got out. We pulled out. And the militias, Christian militias with probably the encouragement of the Israelis or at least their acquiescence—

MILES: Probably.

Q: —came in and slaughtered a hell of a lot of women and children—

MILES: Yes.

Q: —elder people in the camps. And then we put the Marines back in. And here you are, a part of this. But you know, the question comes up, what the hell were we doing? Because, for example having all the Marines in one big building and all, I mean, it was almost as though we were asking for a target. Because they were not out doing anything, they were just standing by. You know, the Marine Corps is saying, get us out of here.

MILES: They were going on patrols but they were so restricted in what they could actually do on those patrols that they had a symbolic value only. I do recall one fabulous scene though where a Marine officer climbed up on an Israeli tank and was pounding on the hatch with the butt of his pistol. At first the Marines and the other members of the Multilateral Force were welcomed for bringing an end to the internecine conflict which had been tearing Lebanon and Beirut apart for years. At first the intervention worked.

Peace did return to the city. But, later—and I was gone from the Bureau by the time this happened—the ROE were changed. The United States began to identify more clearly with the Lebanese Government and you had things like Bud McFarlane, the President's National Security Advisor, going over there and actually calling in artillery strikes from the big guns on the ships. By then we had become partisans in the Lebanese civil war.

Q: Sure. I mean, the Battleship New Jersey there, for God's sake.

MILES: Yes. Well, that was certainly not envisioned when we made the original decision to intervene; not at all. The original decision was—with the written agreement of all the hostile sides—that we and the other partners in the Multi-National Force would simply go in as a separation force to keep the armed factions from bumping up against each other, shedding blood and making it impossible to have serious political talks. And then later that changed to where we became partisans on the side of the Lebanese government.

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop.

MILES: Yes, that's fine. I think it is.

Q: You left there in what, 1980?

MILES: Eighty-three. And '83 to '84 I worked up on Capitol Hill for Senator Fritz Hollings. I had one of those American Political Science Association fellowships.

Q: Okay. Well, we'll talk about that and then we'll move on.

MILES: Okay, yes. That's good.

Q: Alright. Today is the 9th of April, 2007. This is Appomattox Day.

MILES: It is. That's right.

Q: Dick, you went to Capitol Hill when? What year was that?

MILES: It was 1983.

Q: What were you doing?

MILES: The American Political Science Association gives what amounts to fellowships to certain government employees to spend a year up on Capitol Hill. It's a competitive thing and I was selected for that program from the State Department. It involved about three months' of study of Congress at Johns Hopkins' SAIS and that was very enjoyable, I must say. And then you have to go out and find a member of Congress who will take you in. All they have to do is provide some desk space; your agency pays your salary, of course. And you are then supposed to do half of the remaining nine months with a

member of the House and then switch to a member of the Senate or vice versa, but all along I wanted to spend the whole time working for Senator Hollings and so I—

Q: Senator Hollings of—?

MILES: Democrat of South Carolina. Not in the Senate anymore. He retired a couple of years ago.

So I went to his office and talked to him and talked to his assistant. I had known the Senator slightly from my civil rights days in South Carolina. But he had never had one of these APSA interns before, "fellows" I guess you would say, and he was not sure he wanted one now either, so I had to do some talking to get into that office. In case that didn't work out I also interviewed with the late Senator Paul Tsongas from Massachusetts and with Dick Lugar and Lee Hamilton, both from Indiana. And that caused a little bit of a contretemps because when I interviewed with Senator Tsongas, he somehow thought that I had made a commitment to work for him. Now I was very clear in my interview with Tsongas that my first choice was Senator Hollings, but that I would be very happy to work with Senator Tsongas depending on how this worked out. Well, when I informed his staff assistant that I was going to work for Senator Hollings, I got word back that Tsongas was mighty put out, that he thought he had a commitment from me to come and work for him. Well, there wasn't much that could be done about it. This was just one of those unfortunate misunderstandings. But then it got doubly unfortunate because Larry Napper, who later went on to be an ambassador himself in several countries, was in the same program that year. He also interviewed with Senator Tsongas and he had made a similar statement to the Senator, about how he preferred to work for, I forget who, Lee Hamilton, I think, and Tsongas second, and Tsongas had the same impression from him, that Larry had made a commitment to him. And so, unfortunately, Tsongas was extremely annoyed at the State Department for a while, but it was his own misunderstanding. Well, unknown to us, the poor man was suffering from a form of cancer at that time and maybe he had his mind on other things. I would have been happy to work for him but, also happily, I was able to work for Senator Hollings. And then when it came time to switch over from, in this case, the Senate to the House side, I asked the Senator if he would write a letter to the people back in the State Department just saying how invaluable I was, you know, in quotes, to his office, and how he wanted me to stay, and would the program people allow that and of course they did. I mean, if a U.S. Senator asks for it, they are going to allow it. So I spent the whole nine months with Senator Hollings.

Q: Okay. What were you doing with Senator Hollings?

MILES: Well, he had a relatively small office and a very loyal one; his people had been with him for 10, 12, 15 years or more and he didn't like staff meetings. He would have frequent, impromptu meetings on a particular subject as the need arose and the whole time I worked for him he never had a regularly scheduled weekly meeting or anything like that, a very admirable trait but one you can't get away with in the State Department or in our overseas missions. So he asked me if I would just pick up some of the foreign affairs issues that he was interested in and also draft answers to letters from his

constituents as appropriate. I agreed and added that I would like to go down and visit his field offices in South Carolina because the fellowship program allowed two trips down to the member's state, so I spent a fair amount of time down in South Carolina. I visited old friends, of course, but I also visited all the field offices and I learned a lot, all of which I passed on to the Senator. I think the people out in the field enjoyed it. They sometimes felt a bit isolated.

The Senator had a short run for the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1984. Since I was prohibited by the Hatch Act from participating in his campaign, I kept pretty much to my work in his regular Senate office.

Q: When you were down in the state what were the major preoccupations of the people? Did the Senator himself have any particular specialties or interests?

MILES: Well, U.S. senators are interested in everything because you never know what your constituents are going to be interested in and you've got to be very careful not to make an idle remark which people might interpret as being ignorant, or even worse, condescending. Statements like that will come right back and bite you in the ass every time and you don't want that to happen, and so the Senator was literally interested in everything. He was particularly interested in commercial matters. He had been on the Commerce Committee, it was his bailiwick actually, and he was very concerned over the loss of the textile workers' jobs in South Carolina, but at the same time he was working hard to bring new industry into the state and especially foreign investors.

Q: Is Spartanburg there?

MILES: Yes, that's right.

Q: I remember going to Spartanburg with a senior seminar in the mid-'70s and there was really quite a remarkable development there.

MILES: Well, that's true. And it's true throughout the mid-South, but maybe South Carolina was a little bit ahead of the mark in attracting foreign investment. There was a Saudi angle to this and former governor John West, who later became Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, tried to capitalize on that; there was some Saudi investment in South Carolina. Well, they were interested in foreign investment money wherever they could get it because the traditional industries of South Carolina were drying up, you know. The textile mills were closing down because they couldn't meet the foreign competition.

The Senator was quite interested in efforts to help improve the quality of life of the poor people in South Carolina. He had had an important role in developing what were known as the technical education centers, "TEC" they called them, which basically were for high school dropouts or people who were about to become high school dropouts. They could go to one of these places where they could learn sheet metal work or air conditioning repair or whatever and, as a high school dropout myself, I thought that was a great idea.

He was interested, of course, in foreign affairs but ’83, ’84 was not a particularly crucial point in American foreign affairs so things were rather stable, I’d say, and we didn’t get into that too much. I did a certain amount of work for him having to do with some important constituents of his, people who had some influence in the state, and we had a lot of arguments about some of those people.

Q: Could you give a flavor?

MILES: Well there was one fellow, Rajko Medenica, who was a medical doctor of Yugoslav origin, I don’t recall his ethnicity, but he was from Montenegro. He had been living in Switzerland and he had developed what he labeled as a radical cure for cancer, involving a substance called “interferon”. The Senator wanted to get him into the United States but there were some indictments against him, not anything from the United States but from abroad, which hindered his ability to get a visa, so he asked me to look into it. I did look into it and felt the fellow was probably guilty of the things for which the indictments had been issued. As for the medical treatment, I’m a layman, I know nothing about medicine, but it seemed to me that the magic cure for cancer was something like magic beans in the fairy tale and I reported this to the Senator. He didn’t care for that too much; he wanted a more positive answer. But in the end, he backed off a little bit on that fellow and later Medenica was, in fact, convicted of some kind of billing fraud. He had worked for the state health system in the former Yugoslavia and had set up practice in Switzerland. The indictments came from both Switzerland and Yugoslavia, and in the end he was found guilty. He did eventually get to America and practiced here, but on a trip to Europe a few years ago, he was arrested and extradited to Switzerland where he spent a short time in jail before returning to America. So I think I saved the Senator from a certain embarrassment at that point. The fellow had—well, either with his cure or in some other way—brought about a remission in a cancer patient, the daughter-in-law of a person of some influence in the State of South Carolina and that’s how the matter was brought to the attention of the Senator in the first place.

Also at that time there were efforts by, if you can believe this nowadays—but keep in mind this was 1983—by people who called themselves Hezbollah to organize rallies and demonstrations on the Capitol steps. They would invite congressmen to come down and appear with them and speak at these rallies and quite a few of the congressmen did that because the organizers claimed to be opposed to the Iranian Government. I checked on that with the State Department and found out that Hezbollah was a Lebanon-based organization suspected of having used considerable violence including, allegedly, blowing up the Beirut Embassy and the Marine barracks in Beirut, and that it would probably be best just stay to away from them no matter what they claimed they were trying to do at the moment. And so I discouraged the Senator from going out and appearing at their rallies on Capitol Hill.

I remember one memorable argument I had with the Senator. At that time, there was a proposal to open diplomatic relations with the Vatican. It was a controversial issue, at least it was in South Carolina, and the Senator was opposed to it. He asked me to look into it and give him my personal opinion. I did that and found among other things that the

United States actually had consular relations with the Papal States from the late 18th century until 1870 and diplomatic relations with the Pope from the mid-19th century until a little before 1870. So there was ample precedent. I knew about the professional diplomatic service of the Vatican and I knew of the influence which the Vatican had in many countries and on many issues. Well, I reported all that to the Senator and said that, in my judgment, establishment of diplomatic relations would be a good idea. He trotted out the "separation of church and state" argument and I had the temerity to say that I thought that the founders were talking about the domestic political structure of the United States and not about foreign affairs. Well, he was pretty annoyed, said loudly, "You're lecturing me on Constitutional law?" And he threw the brief I had just given him into his outbox so hard that it bounced out and fell on the floor. Well, he did have a quick temper but he also was quick to lose it. We remained on very good terms and I always tried to stop by and see him whenever I returned to Washington. It was a great loss to the Senate when he retired.

So I occupied myself with things like that, just trying to help him do the things he wanted to accomplish and answer his constituents' letters and keep him out of trouble as best as I could. That is what we all did on the staff, a very congenial staff, until he retired in 2005, I guess it was—the same year I retired. I kept up a very friendly relationship with him, with his wife, who worked in his office, and his staff all that time. He visited Sharon and me overseas.

Q: Given your interests in civil rights, how did you find South Carolina, being the center of segregation at one point and all? What was your reading on it in the mid-'80s?

MILES: South Carolina had come a long way and in fact so had even Strom Thurmond, the other Senator from South Carolina. It's kind of odd that Hollings, who was an Army officer in World War II, would be the junior Senator from South Carolina for all but two of his entire 36 years in the Senate, but that's the way it worked out. Anyhow, with the vast increase in black voter registration and participation in South Carolina, even Senator Thurmond saw the light and he hired a black person on his staff even before Hollings did. Hollings had some black people representing him down in the field offices in South Carolina but, when I worked for him, he didn't have a black person on the staff in Washington. He had a black intern the year I was there but not a permanent member of the staff. Later, of course, he had not one but several black staff members. And when I went down to South Carolina and talked to my old civil rights friends, this was 17 or 18 years after I had left, they reported to me that the Republicans, while they were trying to build the Republican Party on the racial issue, were nonetheless trying to cater to some blacks in the community, probably to split the black vote away from the Democrats. And so Senator Thurmond had hired blacks on his local staff, for example, and I was told more than once, when I went around and talked to my black friends from the old days that if in a community you felt you needed federal assistance to help accomplish a particular goal, to complete a sewage line or get a road paved or whatever, you would first go to Senator Thurmond and his staff. You would usually find satisfaction there, they said, and if you were not able to find satisfaction there, then you might go to Senator Hollings to see what he could do. I reported that back to the Senator. I said, "You really

need to do some rebuilding work with your black constituents. They have been very loyal to you and they don't feel like your people in the field are being receptive to their requests and trying to help them accomplish the things that they want to accomplish and so you're beginning to lose some of that influence that you had." The Senator did take some steps to correct that.

Q: After this year—this would be what, '85?

MILES: Eighty-four. I left Washington and went to Belgrade.

Q: So you were in Belgrade from '84 to when?

MILES: Eighty-seven. Three years.

Q: What was the situation in Belgrade?

MILES: Well, it was still the whole country of Yugoslavia. The Balkan Wars hadn't started yet but the tension was certainly there. This was the period when Milosevic began his rise to power. When I first went there in '84, he was actually an official of the Beogradska Banka, a major bank in Belgrade. At the same time, he held office in the Serb branch of the Communist Party, called the LCY, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. I served under two different ambassadors during that time, and I used to accompany them to meetings with Milosevic over in the bank office. All the Westerners believed he was a pragmatic person of somewhat liberal bent, Western oriented. Milosevic was very personable, and initially didn't give any hint of the kind of megalomania and extreme nationalism that he later became identified with. I don't think he ever was an extreme Serb nationalist, to tell you the truth, but he became identified with it and will probably go down in history that way.

Q: He was more an opportunist.

MILES: Well, he was; he was a political opportunist. And he saw, in the Kosovo situation—he was not looking at Bosnia then, no one was really at that time—but in the Kosovo situation he saw a means by which he could rise higher up in the Communist Party structure. There had been unrest in Kosovo since, well, probably since time began, but certainly in the post-war period going on into the '80s. There were periodic demonstrations. People would sit and block the highway, or they'd have a hunger strike or whatever, because they were not well treated by the Serb majority. They were governed, basically, by Serb politicians or by Albanians who had knuckled under to Serb direction. I don't remember exactly what took Milosevic down to Kosovo in the spring of 1987, but that was when he made the famous—

Q: I thought it was 1989, wasn't it, when the—

MILES: Well, there was a series—

Q: —anniversary of a battle with Kosovo.

MILES: Well, there was a series of events, yes, but he made that famous speech in Kosovo Polje, when he said, "No one should beat you anymore," in the spring of 1987. Well, the Serb crowd, both in Kosovo and in Serbia proper, loved this. Sharon and I watched that event on television and we were quite alarmed by it. Milosevic realized he had something he could use to improve his own political position within the Serbian Communist Party apparatus. He basically climbed up to the top on the back of Ivan Stambolić, who had been the long-time Party chief in Serbia. I met Ivan Stambolić in the '80s and I got to know him better when I went back to Belgrade in the 1990s. He told me then, in the '90s, that he had not made very many political mistakes in his life, but his one big mistake was underestimating Slobodan Milosevic. He was right. The result of this miscalculation was the Balkan Wars and the dissolution of Yugoslavia and, later, the NATO air campaign and the loss of Kosovo and, last but absolutely not least, Stambolić's own murder at the hands of Milosevic's henchmen. I'll return to that later.

Q: What was your job there?

MILES: I was Political Counselor, head of the Political Section, and Sharon was the Acting Commercial Attaché for part of that time.

Q: Who were the ambassadors?

MILES: David Anderson and then Jack Scanlan, two good ambassadors. We had a good political section too, by the way.

Q: Who else?

MILES: Well, Dan Fried was there. He became Ambassador to Poland and then served several years in the NSC and has now become Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. Janet Bogue was in the Section. She later became Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European bureau and she's now retired.

Q: What's her name?

MILES: Janet Bogue, B-O-G-U-E. She might be interesting for you. She was there in Yugoslavia and then she went to Kazakhstan where she was Beth Jones' DCM. A very nice person and an outstanding officer; I like Janet very much. And Bill Hill was there, who later became the OSCE representative in Moldova. Bill is still around. Have you—?

Q: Is he retired?

MILES: Yes, but he's still very active. And the officers did very good work. We were quite interested in the internal political situation. There was a rather celebrated trial going on of the so-called Belgrade Six—six intellectuals who the Communist Party believed had crossed over a certain line and had gone a little too far in some of their writing and

activities. Dan Fried was particularly good at staying in touch with them, offering them some mild encouragement and reporting back to Washington on how this was going.

Q: How did they cross the line? Was it too much the capitalist line or too much the Western line or was it just that they were—what was it?

MILES: It involved allegations of holding illegal meetings and distributing subversive material both inside Yugoslavia and to foreigners abroad who were said to be hostile to the Yugoslav State. There was considerable intellectual ferment in Serbia at that time. This was also a period when Vuk Drašković, who is the current Foreign Minister of Serbia and is something of a Serb nationalist, was fanning the flames with regard to the situation of the Serbs in Kosovo. I wouldn't call Vuk an extreme nationalist although some would. Anyhow he's certainly a nationalist. Vuk was a famous author; he had written several quite popular novels, and he would appear at the Writers' Club in Belgrade. Lord, I've spent many a smoke-filled evening at the Writers' Club. You know, the Writers' Club was always a hotbed of intellectual activity, and he would hold forth down at the Writers' Club on how we have to keep the Kosovar Albanians in line and that kind of thing.

And about this time the famous *Memorandum* from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences was released. That also fanned the flames of anti-Kosovar sentiment. It was an exciting time, I must say.

Q: From the Embassy optic how did you view Croatia and also the role of our Consulate General in Zagreb?

MILES: We got along fine with the people up at the Consulate General. They covered Croatia and Slovenia and we would go up there occasionally just to kick the tires and see what was going on. I don't recall any differences between the Embassy and the Consulate General at that time.

Q: What about Croatia? Did we have a feel for where—?

MILES: Well, it was a quiet period. You know, all of us, to a person, underestimated the inherent nationalism of the different ethnic groups in Yugoslavia. We were certainly all aware of the past ethnic differences and even the violence and atrocities that had been perpetrated by one group against another group all over the former Yugoslavia; we were all aware of that. But I think the Yugoslav government, even after Tito's death, was trying really, really hard to keep up the idea of Yugoslav unity and the brotherhood of all of the peoples of Yugoslavia. I mean, you could still get yourself put in jail for uttering hostile remarks against another ethnic group. I remember the case of Vojislav Šešelj, who is being tried at The Hague right now, accused of excesses during the Bosnian fighting. Around the mid-'80s, Šešelj was put in jail in Sarajevo for extremist statements or writing that he had made. And the Embassy was instructed by the State Department and I was instructed by the Ambassador to go and deliver a demarche to the Foreign Ministry protesting his imprisonment, raising freedom of speech and freedom of the press and all

that, and I was told by my Yugoslav friends in the Ministry, "We hear what you're saying, but you know, this man is certifiable and he's a lot better locked up than out on the street." And I said, "Well, I'm just doing my job. This is an official demarche and so I'm just delivering it." And indeed, he was a very dangerous man as we all found out later.

This may be as good a place as any to put in a plug for a Yugoslav popular music singer named Lepa Brena—real name Fahreta Jahic. Born in Bosnia, she was and still is a true Yugoslav patriot. Her song *Zivela Jugoslavija* became an unofficial national anthem—sort of like *God Bless America*. To the amusement and occasionally to the annoyance of Sharon, I became a real fan. I bought her records, attended her concerts and praised her to anyone willing to listen. My admiration was not unshared. I remember a ranking Foreign Ministry official telling me, "She is worth twenty of our ambassadors!" Sharon and I became friends with her and her husband when we returned to Belgrade for my third assignment. By that time, unfortunately, not many people were interested in hearing the song *Zivela Jugoslavija* any more.

Q: Did you find Yugoslavia—was it easy to travel around and go places?

MILES: Oh, yes. Occasionally the military attachés would go a little bit too close to some military installations that were off limits for them and would find themselves detained temporarily until it could be sorted out, but otherwise no one in the Embassy, to my knowledge, ever had any particular difficulties. Certainly the Political Section team and I went all over the place and never had any trouble. We were, of course, under mild surveillance but not to the point of interfering with our activities. When Dan Fried would go and observe the trial of the "Belgrade Six", no one ever bothered him in that process. We were always under observation by the Yugoslav secret police but we were not really interfered with as we went about our business. And at that time, Yugoslavs could read any Western periodical they wanted to or listen to the overseas radio stations or travel abroad; there were very, very few people who were denied passports. It was a communist country, but it was far from being a dictatorship. It wasn't a democracy exactly, but it wasn't a dictatorship either.

Q: How did you find—well, let's take some of the players—Macedonia? How did Macedonia fit into—?

MILES: There was always unrest between the Macedonians and the Serbs. Serbs resented the fact that Tito had allowed the church in Macedonian to have an autocephalous status and had encouraged the development of Macedonian language and Macedonian institutions. They believed, probably correctly, that he did this to help build the unity of Yugoslavia by weakening the dominant position of the Serbs in the federation. And the Macedonians, of course, had grievances against the Serbs. There were church differences over property. There were some very minor "border" issues. And of course there were perennial difficulties between Bulgaria and Macedonia. Some people took these arguments between the Macedonians and the Bulgarians seriously. I never did. I was always reminded of *Gulliver's Travels* and the conflict between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians over which end of an egg should be broken at breakfast. But none of these

were terribly serious matters. They didn't usually involve violence. They didn't usually involve mass demonstrations or anything. They were just part of the tension of being in Yugoslavia in those days. And it's worth noting that with the collapse of the communist system in Bulgaria and in Yugoslavia, these problems virtually disappeared.

Q: Bosnia-Herzegovina?

MILES: You know, it was a very quiet place at that time and in retrospect probably we should all have spent more time over there because obviously the fault lines were much deeper than we thought and much more dangerous. As far as we were concerned, the big issue in Bosnia-Herzegovina at that time was the phenomenon of the appearance of the Virgin Mary at Medjugorje. She allegedly appeared to some children in 1981 and, by their account, had reappeared before them several times. By the mid-'80s, this whole business had become a very real social and religious phenomenon. Our daughter Elizabeth was finishing high school about then nearby in Austria, so she went down to Medjugorje to see what she could see—she observed the crowd and the passing scene. When she did her required essay for application for college, including to Haverford College where she decided to go, she wrote about her visit to Medjugorje. She had a good record from high school, but I think that essay helped her get accepted. One of the little benefits of Foreign Service life.

At that time we had a very active military-to-military relationship and I was involved in this as a kind of civilian advisor to the Ambassador. Of course the Defense Attaché's office dealt with most of that but, I was involved from the political standpoint. I would go on the visits to the military factories where we were interested in having some things co-produced or allowing the Yugoslavs to produce certain things under license. We had an existing arrangement where American servicemen stationed in Europe could travel to Yugoslavia only with their military ID card; they didn't need a passport or a visa, and they could stay in the Yugoslav military resorts, some in the mountains and some on the sea, for quite inexpensive rates.

We had a joint military commission, half Yugoslav, half American, that would meet twice a year, once in America, once in Yugoslavia. I would attend those meetings, both in Washington and also in Yugoslavia, and it was always very interesting really. I did get to know some Yugoslav military officers who were still in positions of influence in the Serb military when I went back for my final tour of duty in 1996. This was fascinating work. There were some people in our military in Washington who were very uneasy about this relationship, so this part of the process of trying to move the relationship along did encounter some minor difficulties from time to time.

Q: Slovenia: wasn't this felt to be almost a separate country?

MILES: Well, it was freer of tension than any of the other republics because the population was overwhelmingly Slovene. And also the standard of living was higher than in the rest of the country. I don't know what the precise figure is but my guess is that there would be something like 98 percent homogeneity among the population.

Yugoslavia still had the rotating presidency and they still had the so-called national key formula, where for important positions like ambassadorships, the higher bureaucratic positions and so on, the positions were supposed to be shared equally among the republics, and while most of the other republics had no problem finding adequate people to send to these key positions, because they paid reasonably well and were often just sinecures, Slovenia always had a hard time with it because the Slovenes didn't want to come down to Belgrade and live there. I talked to several of these people, including Slovenian politicians, and they said basically that they just didn't want to live in Belgrade. They were very happy living in Slovenia and saw no reason to go down there.

Q: Was Franjo Tudjman at all a figure while you were there?

MILES: No. No, he wasn't. We knew who he was but at that time he played no role in particular. He had been imprisoned for expressing nationalist sentiment and had been released, so maybe he was just lying low.

We really didn't foresee the immediate—historically, the virtually immediate—separation of Yugoslavia and the subsequent Balkan War. We really didn't foresee that. We saw the cracks in the societal structure with Kosovo because they had been there for a long time; they were highly visible, and we used to cover Kosovo pretty carefully because of that. So I guess you could say we were not too surprised when later the difficulties with Kosovo intensified and led eventually to war between the NATO powers and Yugoslavia. But the big split—Croatia and Slovenia splitting off, Bosnia being fractured—we really didn't foresee that, at least not in the mid-'80s.

Q: Well now, how did we view this rotating presidency? Did we see this as something that could keep going or was this considered a provisional thing that would have to shake down into something a little more effective or how—?

MILES: No one thought that the post-Tito political structure would survive forever and that includes the rotating presidency. Maybe it was a clever idea to try to postpone what appeared to be somewhat inevitable, but it was so inefficient that no one thought it would be long-lasting.

Q: Yes.

MILES: Really, after Tito's death, there were only two national institutions which still functioned: the Army and the Party. But the Party simply didn't amount to much after Tito's death. Tito was the Party, really. After Tito's death, you had a lot of "Parties", one in every republic and province. And there were almost as many leaders. People used to speak of "Little Titos". One of Tito's faults was that he had systematically cut down anyone who might develop a following of his own. So, when he died, the Party was basically run by second-stringers. The first-stringers had been removed from the game long before.

The Serbian Orthodox Church was a strong institution and, in a sense, it had nation-wide influence, but its real center of influence was in Serbia. It was weak in Montenegro and Macedonia and had very little influence in Croatia and even less in Slovenia. That left the Army and the Army, that is, the officer corps, was predominantly Serb. Some of the criticism of this was a little bit unfair because there certainly were Croats and others in the officer ranks, but it's true that Serbs were predominant. Tudjman himself was a general, for goodness' sake, and he was as Croatian as they come. I never thought that there was out and out prejudice against others than Serbs serving in the office corps. I don't think anyone was trying to keep the officer corps Serb at the expense of the other nationalities, but in the end the Army also did not prove to be a national unifying force because it was considered Serb dominated and many of the other army officers—sort of like General Lee, I guess, staying with Virginia rather than the federal union—opted to stay with Croatia or Slovenia when push came to shove.

Q: Yes. I remember—I'm talking now about the 60s—but our feeling was that the major unifying force besides Tito was the Soviet Union, the fact that if Yugoslavia started to break apart, this might offer a target of opportunity for the Soviets, and this meant that, you know—this could spell real problems for the United States but also for the Yugoslavs.

MILES: Well, that's true, we did think that way. We thought that way and they thought that way and you did mention Tito, who was the primary unifying force in Yugoslavia. Tito tried to maintain the spirit of the partisan movement and the post-war nation building activities and also, frankly, was not above using some hard-handed methods on the part of the secret police. But once Tito died, this all began to fray.

Already in the 1984-87 period, the Soviet Union saw the beginnings of perestroika and glasnost, and while there was a lot of argument about that in Western circles, as you remember, the fact was that the Soviet Union was less and less likely to try any kind of maneuver of that sort. It had not been very successful in going into Afghanistan, as you remember, and so I think that the Afghanistan situation was probably another inhibiting factor regarding any sort of interventionism.

Q: How were the Yugoslavs dealing with their neighbors? It's got like seven neighbors.

MILES: Well, they got along pretty well. There were constant—and I followed this very closely—there were constant small irritants on the part of nationalist elements in Macedonia with Bulgaria and vice versa. Ditto in Slovenia and even a bit with Croatia against Austria and Italy. There was constant squabbling over issues like whether the road signs near the border were in two languages or not, or whether the Slovenian minority in Italy was able to use the Slovenian language in the schools. These were piddling, little disputes, quite frankly. I mean, no one was being persecuted; no one was being forcibly deprived of their property or their land; no one was being refused the right to travel and so on. But it was almost as though the local people and authorities just felt the need to complain about something and so by God they did.

Q: I remember it used to be the phrase "we are surrounded by"—what was it, "brigama"? The word "brigama" is "troubles" and to form it you take each letter in there and it spells the countries that Yugoslavia was surrounded by.

MILES: That's right. They did have a lot of neighbors. But there were no serious border disputes. No one mobilized troops or anything of that sort to try to rectify these alleged wrongs suffered by the national minorities abroad.

Q: How about the youth? I'm thinking universities. Did we have much contact with them?

MILES: I think we underestimated them. Looking back at that period of time, I think, in the Political Section especially, we should have been paying more attention to the young people. We did try to determine their attitudes about their feeling of nationality, of nationhood, that is, belonging to a nation as opposed to belonging to an ethnic group. But we did not focus on youth as much as we had in the past when there had been specific State Department programs devoted to youth. That had all faded away and we didn't pick it up on our own. We might have been a little quicker to see the difficulties that came in Yugoslavia if we had paid a little more attention to young people, especially to college-age people.

And by the way, there are pretty brave people in this age group. A later generation of these students, who faced beatings, expulsion from the university and even jail became the core of the political resistance to Milosevic and through their activities they created the change in public opinion which ultimately brought about Milosevic's removal from power.

Q: With major demonstrations in Belgrade and elsewhere.

MILES: Yes. And not only that but several years later they were an inspiration to the people opposed to Shevardnadze in Georgia. There was contact between the leaders of the student opposition movement in Serbia, Otpor [Resistance], and some of the Kmara [Enough] activists in Georgia. We did pay attention to young people in the '84-'87 period; I just don't think we paid enough attention. I went myself to meetings at the law faculty at that time where there would be something like a semi-demonstration by the students about this or that but we just didn't take this seriously enough. We didn't have contact with the students on a systematic basis; we would do it only sporadically, and that is a big difference.

Q: What about the media, TV, newspapers, radio there? What was your impression?

MILES: Well, we knew those people and our public affairs people spent time with them. We provided the usual sorts of training and exchanges to help them improve the quality of their product. Yugoslav TV was pretty free, as was the print media at that time. Of course, the government influenced the media in various ways but I don't remember any particularly ham-handed efforts by the government or the Party to curtail the media while

I was there. Sharon and I were particularly close to a senior journalist at *Politika* who was eventually fired, mainly, I think, because she was Croatian.

Q: Had the Communist Party as a communist party lost its zeal or whatever?

MILES: Yes, the stuffing had gone out of it. As for the government, the federal ministries still functioned or pretended to function. I remember that enormous governmental building that they had in—

Q: SIV?

MILES: Yes, the SIV [Federal Executive Council] building. All the ministries were there and people were moving around doing this and doing that, although lord knows what. Meanwhile, over in the League of Communists building, it was very quiet. I would go over there occasionally; I knew some of the people over there and I'd go over there periodically and talk to them and I'd also talk to the leaders of the national youth organization which was still housed over there in the same building. But I always got the impression when I went there that the driving force of the Party had somehow departed the building—that it had become just a nice place for people to hang out and get some kind of a salary for pretending to work.

Q: What was your opinion of the operation of one of the ambassadors, was it David Anderson or Jack Scanlan?

MILES: Well, I liked them both and am still in touch with Jack Scanlan. I just got a letter from him last week, actually.

Q: Where is he now?

MILES: He's down in Florida. Unfortunately, his wife died recently.

Q: I knew she was having a problem.

MILES: We went to a memorial service that they had here in Washington late last year, I believe it was, and he came up from Florida for that. But he is fading a bit himself now. He's not in the best of health.

He was fine as Ambassador to Yugoslavia. I did think he went a little far, though, in supporting this Yugo car thing. You remember "Crvena Zastava", the Red Flag Company?

Q: Yes, wasn't it a sort of Fiat or something?

MILES: It was like a Fiat. It started out that way. Shortly after the war the Crvena Zastava Company produced a very, very tiny Fiat under license. It was called the Fica, you remember, pronounced "Ficha", and everyone drove that little rattletrap around; it

was the most ubiquitous car in Yugoslavia. It was cheap; people could afford to buy it. And then they improved it and it actually became a reasonably decent car. Then in the early 1980s, I don't recall exactly when, probably about '82, '83, several investors, including some Americans, decided that they would create a separate line for the car, at the plant in Kragujevac, and they would provide a higher degree of quality control, better quality of paint, etc. They would make the car to American specifications, call it the Yugo and would send it off to America to be sold for, I don't recall exactly how much, but around $2000. So, for a while, that was the cheapest new car you could buy in America. Unfortunately for everyone, it was just not a very good car for American conditions. It became the butt of a lot of jokes because, despite its low cost, it was just not a very reliable car. Eagleburger was one of the investors in the company and Scanlan has always been very, very loyal to Eagleburger. Eagleburger was his mentor in many ways and so perhaps for that reason, I don't know, he went a little further than he probably should have in helping to promote that car. It was a U.S.-Yugoslav joint venture but still it was a 100 percent Yugoslav product. Scanlan was very proud of the fact, for example, that he got the company to lease a Yugo to the Embassy for a dollar a year or something like that. He then put the American flag on the right fender and would drive that little thing around to official meetings, which the Yugoslavs themselves did not really appreciate. They thought it was a little bit tacky, I think. Certainly no Yugoslav official ever rode around in a Yugo. My wife Sharon, who was the Acting Commercial Attaché during this time, spent an inordinate amount of time on the phone with the Zastava plant getting spare parts to keep the car running. It seemed to eat windshield wipers and fan belts.

And I remember once going to a meeting with Scanlan in the Yugo. Now the protocol is that ambassadors always sit in the back seat on the right side. But on this occasion, I had to sit in the back because Scanlan, who is taller than I am, couldn't fit in the back comfortably. So he sat in the front seat and I sat in the back seat and off we went to call on, I think it was the Prime Minister of Serbia or something like that, with the Yugo and the flag flying. Anyhow, we arrived; he got out of the front seat—this was right after he arrived in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslavs didn't really know him very well and they didn't know me much either at the higher levels of government. Well, when he got out of the front, they sort of ignored him and when I got out of the back, they shook my hand in welcome. They thought I was the Ambassador. It was really kind of funny.

But both Anderson and Scanlan were good ambassadors. They had a good sense for what was happening and they knew their way around. Neither of them made any mistakes while they were there.

Q: Well then, you left there in '87?

MILES: Eighty-seven.

Q: At that time, whither Yugoslavia in your mind?

MILES: At that time we were troubled by Milosevic's climbing up the political ladder very rapidly, beginning to use the Kosovo issue and that developed further, as you

indicated earlier, after I left, to the point where it became very dangerous. But, in 1987, we still didn't really foresee the imminent breakup of Yugoslavia and we so didn't foresee the violent events which were to come. So, when I left in '87, I don't think we were terribly worried about whither Yugoslavia. We didn't think it would last forever but we didn't think it would collapse in a couple years either. Well, it shows once again that it's very difficult to make predictions in this business.

Q: Okay. Let me see: '87 you went where?

MILES: I had a year at Harvard—it was mid-career training. So I spent a year as a Fellow at what was then the Center for International Affairs. It's now the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Q: How did you find that?

MILES: I enjoyed it very much. It was a fascinating year. Basically this was the old Kissinger program. There are several programs at Harvard to which the State Department sends people. There's the JFK School where they send people to get a degree, and there are probably other programs, but then, across the Yard, there is also the Center for International Affairs. When Kissinger was a professor at Harvard, he would bring in 20 or 25 military officers at the major or lieutenant colonel rank, some journalists and diplomats and others from around the world. They would stay together for the academic year, study what they wanted to and go on some trips together and then have a weekly brown bag lunch session. This was still the format when I was there. It was not a degree program; in fact, we were not allowed to take courses for credit. This was due to the several study trips we took together. I was the only State Department officer in a group of about 25. There was an American Army officer and a Navy officer, but only a few Americans; the group was mostly foreign diplomats and military officers and a sprinkling of other professions.

I remember one of the Irish fellows that I shared an office with and a Peruvian journalist who had become a bit too prominent in Peru because of his detailed articles about the activities of the Shining Path guerillas. We were known as the terrorists because I was writing on Yugoslav terrorism—terrorism against the state of Yugoslavia and Yugoslav state terrorism; the Irish guy was writing on the IRA and efforts to bring it under to control; and the Peruvian guy was writing on the Shining Path guerrillas. The standing joke was they were keeping us all together in one room so that if there was a bomb or something that someone wanted to throw, it would just get us and nobody else. The other two fellows were interested in doing monographs; I was interested in just taking as many courses at Harvard as I possibly could. I just wallowed in the intellectual opportunities that were available there. We were each issued a faculty card which meant basically that we could audit any course we wanted to with the exception of the Medical School and the Business School, and so I did. I took courses in everything from Shang Dynasty China to nuclear arms and disarmament. I was all over the place and I really enjoyed Harvard, I must say. The State Department levied no requirements on me. And the only Harvard

requirement was that you do a paper, and I did one on Yugoslav terrorism. Otherwise I just enjoyed myself.

As a group we traveled to Canada as guests of the Canadian Government. We went to Europe for a week, guests of the European Parliament. These were all study trips, not just tourist trips. And then we went to Asia for three weeks: to China, Japan and South Korea. The foreign fellows also had a study trip across the United States.

Q: How did you find some of the teaching on areas that you were familiar with? Did you find a different thrust from the academic world—how they looked at politics and all—or did you get involved in that?

MILES: I didn't take very many courses on contemporary politics with the exception of one on nuclear policy; it was Nuclear Arms and Nuclear Disarmament by Richard Betts. I didn't know very much about the topic and I just wanted to be brought up to date.

Mostly I took courses in literature or history or culture. I was much more interested in that side of things. I took courses in classical Greek history, classical Greek archaeology, the Shang Dynasty, mannerism, realism in Russian literature. It was a long list and I can't recall all of it. And I hired a tutor and did some Russian language study on the side since I knew I had been assigned to Leningrad. In short, I was interested in broadening my horizons a bit. The one interesting thing I did, though, with regard to the contemporary scene was to attend quite a few floating seminars. You know, people would come to Harvard and would talk on a wide range of subjects. The time and place for these seminar sessions were posted on all the bulletin boards so you could just go whenever you found something interesting. I attended one on the growing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh; this was 1987-1988, before any serious fighting took place there and frankly I didn't even know where Nagorno-Karabakh was at that time.

Q: This is where?

MILES: Nagorno-Karabakh is in Azerbaijan but now it's connected to Armenia. It's physically part of Azerbaijan but it's almost entirely populated by Armenians. The Azeri population fled after heavy fighting in the region in the early '90s. This remains one of those so-called frozen conflicts.

Well anyhow, I had never heard of Nagorno-Karabakh and all I knew was that it was part of the Soviet Union. Well, I was interested in anything to do with the Soviet Union so I went to the seminar and learned, first, where Nagorno-Karabakh was located; second, what was the problem exactly; and third, what were some of the statistics and demographics that were involved. Well, this was interesting, of course. I tucked the information away and thought no more about it. And then not too many years later, I found myself Ambassador to Azerbaijan, a conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh had broken out, the Azeri Government was in permanent crisis over the issue and at one point I was even shot at from the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. So it just shows you should never pass up an opportunity to learn something; you might need it later.

Q: You left Harvard in '89?

MILES: Eighty-eight. I was only there for one year. I should mention one last thing about the year at Harvard. Aleksa Djilas, Milovan Djilas's son, was studying over at the Russian Research Center that year and so I sought him out. I had met his father earlier—I wouldn't say I knew Milovan Djilas well but I had met him and talked to him and so I sought Aleksa out and introduced myself. I mentioned that I had just come from Yugoslavia. And so we talked and we became friends, I think. And then later, when I returned to Yugoslavia for the last time, I saw Aleksa many times.

Q: So you were with a good number of foreign diplomats at the mid-level there. What do you think they brought back with them?

MILES: Well, I think a great love for Harvard because Harvard was very generous to us and treated us very nicely indeed, I must say. The Weatherhead Center was being run then by Les Brown, who is a former Foreign Service officer. Do you know Les, by chance?

Q: I don't.

MILES: He had been around for a long time and he ran the program, had a nice office about the size of this room, you know, very pleasant. And he made sure we had a place for our brown bag lunches; he let us take these trips and encouraged us. So Harvard was very nice and generous and I think everyone developed a great love for Harvard. I know I did. I went there with kind of an inward prejudice against Harvard because I had come through the California and Indiana state college systems and I thought Harvard would be an elitist, snobbish kind of a place. I actually found it quite the opposite; it was a very democratic place with high quality students from all walks of life. And it wasn't just the students at Harvard who were interested in learning. Often I would see faculty members taking classes or attending one of the seminars I described. There was just a love of learning in the air. You know, you're a retired Foreign Service officer; you know how frustrating it is to have an exciting tour overseas, and then to go back to your home town. People are interested in your adventures for about 15 seconds and then they want to talk about local topics—"Did you know that John down the road just bought a new tractor?" or something equally local and equally boring. But at Harvard, basically, you could find people who were keenly interested in what you were doing and could talk seriously about it and you also could learn about, really about anything at all..

Q: How did you find the Asian trip?

MILES: Well, I had spent some time in Japan in the service, but long ago. So it was interesting to see Japan thirty years later in a state of high development and comparative wealth. And then I had never actually been to mainland China, nor to South Korea, and so that was very interesting. In China, we were only in Beijing and that would be like coming only to Washington and thinking that now you might know the United States. So this was a very artificial environment. But at least I could say that I had been to China

and had in fact spent a week there in intellectual conversation with think tank people and government people and so on.

And then South Korea. Before I went there, I also had a kind of a prejudice against South Korea. I thought of it as an oligarchic place where a few people lived very well and everyone else lived very poorly. Hardly the kind of democracy that we should be spending a lot of money and possibly blood to defend. But I must say I found it, at that time, and I have followed it reasonably closely since then, to be a well developed and rounded economy with a degree of prosperity trickling down to people everywhere. We traveled to three different areas in Korea and everywhere we saw quite decent housing, good infrastructure, decent roads, well prepared curbs, telephone poles upright, no broken wires, people driving cars, countryside well kept up, people looking well fed and well clothed. The markets and the department stores looked almost like those in Japan. So you know, I was rather impressed with South Korea. But admittedly I had gone there with a very jaundiced view of the place.

Q: Yes. I was there during the war. Then afterwards I was there in the late '70s and even under Park Chung-hee I was impressed. Unlike so many other dictators, he didn't make the farmers pay for the population in the cities. The farmers got a fair share, which kept them content and they came up to the level of the rest of the people which was a very good way of doing it. It was much more of a planned, efficient economy as opposed to these planned economies which are designed mostly to help the city and help the ruling party.

MILES: Yes. Well, in the late '80s I was fairly impressed with South Korea. I was almost in the Korean War myself. I enlisted about 18 months after the fighting ended.

Q: Then after Harvard whither?

MILES: I already had the assignment to Leningrad as Consul General. When I was offered the assignment I was told I could either go to Moscow as Political Counselor or Leningrad as Consul General—what did I want to do? My inclination was to go to Moscow because it's the capital and consuls general in Leningrad had tended to die an early career death and also frankly to be rather bored. I mean, you can only go to the ballet and the opera so many times. But Sharon convinced me that the times were changing and that it would be a lot of fun to be out there and to be a big fish in a small pond rather than to be lost in Embassy Moscow where, whenever anything really sexy would come along, the Ambassador or the DCM would snap it up and the Political Counselor and his people would just be expected to provide them the back-up that they needed. So it didn't take much convincing and we went off to Leningrad. I have often thought about it—I have been a principal officer five times since then, and I must say the Leningrad assignment was the best assignment I ever had. It was a fascinating time, I had an excellent team and we really covered the waterfront.

Q: You were there from?

MILES: Eighty-eight to ’91.

Q: Eighty-eight to ’91, which is—did you leave Leningrad or did you leave St. Petersburg?

MILES: It was still Leningrad. I left in June 1991. It only changed later that year after I left.

Q: Okay. When you got there in ’88 how would you describe the situation in the Soviet Union?

MILES: Well, it certainly was different from when I had last been there on my first assignment to Moscow, ’76 to ’79. The economic conditions had gotten much worse. Leningrad is a city of over four million people; it’s bigger than many countries and it’s the second largest city in the Soviet Union—or now, in Russia. I was appalled by the deterioration of the infrastructure in the city. The streetcar tracks, for example, had not been repaired in such a long time that they would suddenly give way and street cars would fall over on their sides. Street lights were often burned out and not replaced. And when you would go into anything except the highest class museum, like the Hermitage or the Russian Museum, you’d be appalled at the fact that the walls needed painting or the floor needed shellacking or the windows needed repair. I mean, it was just incredibly shabby.

And then on the personal front, there were actually food shortages in Leningrad at that time. When we first went there people—Soviet citizens—would complain to us, and it was clear that the large variety of things which had been available to the ordinary consumer in the 1970s had been severely diminished. The example which the Russians used to use all the time was salami. Before, they would say, we used to have a choice of 10 or 15 different kinds of salami and now we get our choice of one or two if it’s available at all. And that was quite true. Then later, around 1989, they actually had to introduce food rationing all over Russia but, again, Leningrad is a city of over four million people. That’s a lot of people to feed. And so you had to have ration coupons in order to go and buy things like meat, milk, eggs, cheese and butter. In other words, the key items that you need to survive, with the exception of bread. You could usually find bread. And in the state stores where prices were set by the government, it was almost impossible to find basic staples—potatoes, cabbage, onions, and carrots. They were only available in the outdoor markets where prices were less controlled. The communist system was beginning to break down right in front of our eyes. We diplomats were given as many ration coupons as we wanted. There was no limit on the number that we could have, so we used to share them with our Russian friends, you know, to help them buy things. But then you had to find things to buy because the stores themselves were not supplied with a sufficient quantity of goods to meet consumer demands, even with rationing. Corruption became a big issue and at times you could get these grocery items only under the table, you know, by paying more than the going price and then your coupons didn’t help very much. Our daughter Elizabeth was a student at Leningrad State University. She’s a vegetarian and she relied on cheese and other dairy products for

protein. Every day after classes, she would scour the city looking for cheese, yogurt and kefir; she would queue up in long lines only to find maybe one kind of cheese, if that. Fortunately, we were able to supplement our diet with food ordered from Finland, so we were not in any way suffering as the Soviet people were at that time.

Q: This was before the real collapse of the Soviet system, but what was our analysis? Why after all these years? What was happening?

MILES: Well, we didn't know where this was going to lead. We could see clearly deterioration in the power at the center. The center was no longer holding. And by the way, while these conditions in Leningrad were bad, they were even worse in the military and on the naval ships. Sharon and I developed rather warm and friendly relations with the Soviet military in Leningrad. In general, U.S.-Soviet relations were not bad at that time; the Soviets had announced that they were going to withdraw from Afghanistan and this helped ease the tension between our two countries. Sharon and I and the staff of the Consulate General worked hard to develop relations across the board including with the local military there. Leningrad has always been an important military town. There is an air force base nearby, the naval base has a very long history going back several hundred years and Leningrad was home, as St. Petersburg is today, to the headquarters of the Leningrad Military District.

Q: This is tape five, side one, with Dick Miles. You were talking about the Soviet military?

MILES: Well, if I may say so, we got to know them pretty well, maybe, partly because of the absence of defense attachés. The only military people attached to the Consulate General were the six Marine security guards. The Soviet military didn't feel like we were trying to pry secrets out of them or anything. And after we did get to know them better, when we were in a position to have smaller meetings or to chat with the senior officers at a reception or an event of some sort, they would admit that they were having great difficulties feeding and housing their people. And even though the military establishments in the Soviet Union—and I think they still do this in Russia—actually have their own farms and their own dairies and so on, they were having trouble feeding their people and giving them an adequate diet, let alone housing them properly. Keep in mind, this was about the time that the Soviet forces in Germany, what was then called the Western Group of Forces, were beginning to come back to the Soviet Union. So, in north-west Russia, where the quality of life for the military people was already deteriorating, another several hundred thousand people were coming back from Germany and had to be housed and fed.

Q: Well, at the Embassy and the Consulate General, were we taking a look—was there the feeling that this whole place might implode or something like that? Or had this been going on for so long that the attitude was this was just the Soviet Union?

MILES: We could see a loss of control by the center and a great deterioration in the ability of the center to manipulate the economic system the way it had for the last 70

years but I don't think we foresaw, even at that late point, the pending collapse of the Soviet Union. We saw perhaps a kind of power struggle developing in which another strongman would rise and would use firmer measures to restore order and force people to improve the deliveries of food and other goods. The five year plans were still in operation and the linear economic system they had where X enterprise is supposed to make Y deliveries to Z enterprise at such and such a time—that was all still in place, but it just wasn't working. It was breaking down. For example, let's say you're in a factory that has—this is a real example that I witnessed with my own eyes— you're in a small factory that manufactured pots and pans for kitchen use. Well, the workers would be paid in pots and pans and on "payday" they would each take a cart full of pots and pans out on the highway and try to sell them to passersby. I mean, this was pretty damn pathetic. It was a breakdown of the system and that was not so clear politically as it was economically, but politically it began to be clear also.

There was a democratic opposition that grew and later we can talk about the Baltic States, which we also covered out of Leningrad, but in Leningrad itself, there had been an ecological movement which had been tolerated because in a sense it was politically neutral. The authorities underestimated its political potential. That ecological movement grew into a more organized democratic opposition involving different factions. It was not a terribly unified thing but the people involved were able to talk to each other and to work together. The authorities would sometimes allow them to meet and have their discussions and present their petitions, and sometimes the authorities would try to break up their public rallies and demonstrations, so it was kind of a tug of war that went on.

The first sign that things were changing in a serious, political sense came with the elections for the Supreme Soviet in the spring of 1989. Traditionally the First Secretary of the Leningrad Obkom [the Regional Party Committee], the Commander of the Leningrad Military District and people of that ilk would be elected as People's Deputies. They would then go off to the Supreme Soviet and vote as they were told and so on. Well, to make a long story short, and pretty much to everyone's surprise, they were not re-elected to the Supreme Soviet in that election.

I remember very well how I was called that day by a journalist, an American journalist from Moscow, who said that she had heard that some informal exit polling indicated that these big shots had not been re-elected to their positions in the Supreme Soviet. And with stereotypical State Department arrogance I said, "Well, I can assure you that even in the unlikely event that that has actually happened, the authorities will not allow it to be reported and these people will in fact be returned to the Supreme Soviet." And the next day, I had to call her back and eat humble pie because it had been announced that these people had in fact not been returned to the Supreme Soviet and that members of the democratic opposition had been elected. It was an amazing thing, followed shortly by the forced resignation of the First Secretary of the Obkom, Yuriy Solovyev. I still can't believe that an honest election, and one on that scale, took place in the Soviet Union—but there you are!

Then that was followed about a year later by the election of the Leningrad City Soviet, the Leningrad city assembly. The leaders of many of the democratic organizations sometimes would meet in my residence in Leningrad. We had a palatial residence, really a lot of space, and they said that this is the only place big enough where all could come, and they said they also liked it because it was reasonably free of surveillance. Now, I'm sure there were bugs in the walls and all that, but there weren't KGB goons hanging around. They weren't in danger of being hassled by the police while they were there, so they liked to meet in our residence. They worked hard and they were certainly all over the place, holding election meetings, putting up posters, handing out leaflets and our people were in touch with them and giving them mild encouragement and more just trying to stay in touch with what was going on so we could make reasonable predictions to the Embassy in Moscow and to Washington, because the Consulate General had the authority to report directly to Washington. And lo and behold, the democrats took control of the City Soviet. It was an amazing thing really, less of a shock than the previous year's upset election of the Supreme Soviet deputies, but still startling enough.

And then the democrats had a problem because they couldn't agree among themselves about who should head the City Soviet. In other words, who should become the Mayor of Leningrad, a fairly important position? There was a prominent lawyer who taught at the Law Faculty, Anatoly Sobchak. I think he met Putin at Leningrad University because Putin, just back from his KGB assignment in Germany, had been assigned to the International Relations Office of the University. I met Putin at that time myself, when I enrolled our daughter Elizabeth as a student at LGU. I still have his business card with his name and title in that capacity. Sobchak had been one of the democrats who had earlier been elected to the Supreme Soviet. He had used the Supreme Soviet as a forum to speak out against some of the ills of Soviet society. He was quite an interesting man. Well, the democrats who now were in control of the city Soviet wanted him to become Mayor when they couldn't agree among themselves who in their ranks should have that position. So they asked him if he would run in a special election for a couple of unfilled seats on the city Soviet. You had to be a member of the city Soviet to be elected Mayor. He did, and they urged everyone to vote only for Sobchak so that he could be elected Mayor. And that, in fact, is what happened. He became an energetic, democratically-minded reform Mayor of this major city but, even more interesting; he brought Putin along as his economic advisor, even knowing that Putin was a KGB agent at that time. That was not uncommon in the former Soviet Union. And so that's the story of how Putin got his start in normal politics, and how I met Putin, and how Putin made his first step toward becoming President of all the Russias. Very interesting bit of history, really.

Q: Was this breakdown in the economy and all, was this a fairly recent phenomenon? I mean, was something happening or—?

MILES: I think these were the first really dark days since recovery after World War II. I mean, there were obviously some pretty hard times right after the war, '46, '47, you know, going from an economy on a war footing to a civilian economy while still trying to build up Soviet nuclear power and coping with the great loss of manpower during the

war. The Soviet economy was always slightly warped in favor of the military sector but having said that, this was the first time in the memory of the people that I knew and spoke to, since those dark days of ’46, ’47 up until about 1950 or ’51, that things had been so difficult.

Q: There must have been considerable apprehension, because this was a fairly recent phenomenon, wasn’t it?

MILES: Yes, yes it was. It didn’t go back very far.

Q: People must have thought, “My God, what’s happening?”

MILES: Russians would say, “What are we going to do? What is going to happen to us?” Well, Russians are great survivors, and a number of people had dachas or access to private plots or friends in the country. Even in Leningrad it was not difficult for an ordinary person to have access to a small plot of land, maybe the size of this room or slightly larger, where you could grow some potatoes and onions and things like that. If you had a dacha, you could do even more of that. And then they tried hard, although it was not always practical—we’re talking about four million people or so, that’s a lot of people. Anyhow, you tried hard to develop ties to people in the country, relatives or friends or whatever, where you could get 50 kilos of potatoes or cabbage, some onions, maybe, and survive through the winter. So Russians had various ways to get by but, in those hard times, they were not getting by in a healthy way, and they had to spend an inordinate amount of time on these various food-getting schemes or standing in line waiting for nonexistent vegetables or meat or cheese. It was damned difficult for them.

This caused considerable angst but I don’t think there was fear of famine. Agricultural conditions themselves were normal and people knew that the produce was there, but they could also see that the supply system had broken down. Generally bread was available. I don’t recall a shortage of bread. That was reassuring to Slavs because bread is a crucial part of every meal and in a way you can live on bread, at least for a while. But there was day to day concern, that’s for sure.

My wife, Sharon, was home one day when a neighbor came knocking at the door. It was a rather scrawny, older man with a British accent. He introduced himself as Victor Zorza and he asked Sharon if she happened to have any yogurt because his doctor had recommended it and he couldn’t find any in Leningrad due to the conditions at that time. Now, I expect that Sharon and I were probably the only people in the entire city of Leningrad who knew who Victor Zorza was. Maybe they would have recognized him at the British Consulate General if there had been one, but there wasn’t. Victor told us later that he had knocked at our door just because he saw the flag hanging from the second floor balcony and it had attracted him. Zorza had been a rather well-known syndicated columnist, working out of the *Washington Post*. I used to read him but stopped due to his rather virulent anti-organized labor pieces, but I always respected his insightful and well-drafted pieces on foreign affairs. Well, we became good friends there in Leningrad and, through him, we organized one of the first ever fundraising musical evenings held in

the city since the October Revolution. Victor's daughter had died in a hospice in England and he had come to Leningrad to start a hospice there in her memory. To my knowledge there was no hospice in the entire Soviet Union at that time. His daughter had been good friends with the famous pianist, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Victor prevailed on Ashkenazy to come to Leningrad for the sole purpose of playing at a benefit concert in our residence. We invited all the political, military and cultural big shots but, more important, we invited the Leningrad "Captains of Industry". I remember some of them saying to me, "We're happy to give you money, but we have never done this before. How much do you think is appropriate?" And, off the top of my head, simply thinking about how big their enterprise was, I would say, "Oh, $5000, $10,000," you know, whatever I thought the traffic would bear.

I happened to be near Ashkenazy and a small crowd of acolytes from the Leningrad musical world the afternoon of the concert. He didn't know I was there. Ashkenazy sat down at the piano, started to play something and then drew back, saying—in Russian—"Playing this piano is like driving a tractor!" Admittedly, it was an old piano, but it was well-tuned and, of course, he played brilliantly that evening. He is a lovely man. We have seen him a few times subsequently, in Berlin and in Washington, and he always remembers that event in Leningrad.

There is an interesting follow-on story. We had placed a huge silver punch bowl on a chest of drawers at the head of the entry stairs. People deposited envelopes with cash or pledges and we really did raise a lot of money. I told Victor I would lock all this up in the safe at the residence and he could take it to the bank the next day. Well, after everyone had gone, about 11:30 that evening, Victor and I went to collect everything from the punchbowl. The young man that Victor had asked to guard the bowl was gone and so was all the cash! Victor was beside himself. Anyhow, we called the police, they went to the young man's apartment that very evening and found him and the cash. I guess he had never seen so much money in his life and he simply couldn't resist the temptation.

Q: How did these people who were well-placed in Soviet society view the changing situation there in Leningrad?

MILES: They were probably concerned not only at the dreadful economic conditions but also at the deterioration of their authority—the fact that they didn't enjoy the same kind of respect they used to have, that their orders were not carried out with the same alacrity. When they asked for things to be done or even demanded that things be done, this didn't always happen. It must have worried the hell out of them, but I confess I know less about this phenomenon. I knew the Obkom First Secretary. I knew the managers of the major industrial enterprises, the military commanders, the KGB chief, the Chief of Police and so forth but, frankly, this was something we didn't talk about very much. I had a decent relationship with these people but trying to talk to them about this would have not gone over well. I could do it only obliquely. For example, I visited the shipyards and saw what they were doing to try to convert to civilian production. That was a sad day, by the way. Here they were, management and workers alike, proud builders of beautiful war ships—the guided missile cruiser *Peter the Great* was still being fitted out at the

dock—and what were they showing me? Electric pelmeni [like ravioli] cookers. Maybe it was unpatriotic, but I genuinely shared their dismay.

Q: From the viewpoint of Leningrad and reporting on it, how was Gorbachev viewed when you got there?

MILES: Well, it was clear that he was putting things in motion that were upsetting to the people in power. He forced the resignation of the Leningrad Obkom First Secretary and forced the election of a political nonentity to replace him. This caused some grumbling in Party ranks. But, again, the leadership didn't talk about this very much. Actually Gorbachev didn't come to Leningrad often. I don't suppose he came to Leningrad more than two or three times during the three years I was there. And the diplomats—there were 14 consuls general there—and we were never invited to meet with Gorbachev. It was always considered an internal political thing and we were not included in those visits. So I never met Gorbachev at that time. I only met him later when I went back to Moscow in 1993. Anyhow, I don't know exactly what ordinary people thought of his reforms. I suppose they felt this was a breath of fresh air but they probably didn't know exactly where all this was going.

Q: I was wondering whether—

MILES: They certainly appreciated the freedom of the media. Leningrad TV was out ahead of the state TV in Moscow, for example, and was broadcasting some very interesting things indeed. And Leningrad TV was viewed all over the Soviet Union. So I know that people appreciated that and they attributed that to Gorbachev.

Q: How did you deal with that? I mean, did you have good ties with the media?

MILES: Yes. I would give interviews and, in contrast to the past, these interviews would be printed or shown on TV. I gave one very lengthy and rather personal interview which took up a whole page in *Izvestiya*, which had a circulation of something like twenty million! I still hear about that interview from my Russian friends. I guess that was my personal "fifteen minutes of fame". And I appeared on television. I remember there was a famous plan put forward by an economist named Shatalin, the "500 Day Plan", in which the Soviet economy could be completely reformed in 500 days. I was asked to appear on a television talk show to discuss that plus the history of the development of capitalism in the United States. That TV appearance turned out to have its funny side, and this shows you the freshness of Leningrad television, not to mention their audacity. On this program, the host would ask me a question and I would pontificate about this or that. It was informal, but I had my suit and tie on, very much the Consul General. Well, when the program was shown, the editors had interspersed my serious bits with little snippets from various movies, like Liza Minnelli and Joel Grey in *Cabaret*, singing the song about "money makes the world go round", and dropping coins down into Joel Grey's underpants and stuff like that. And then on the tape I would be asked another serious question and I would—I don't think I was pompous but I was certainly serious—and I would be asked about Shatalin's plan and I would say, "Well, 500 days is not much time

to reform the communist command economy, is it?" You know, this and that, and then they would—they asked me about violence in the capitalist world and I said, "Well, sometimes in our early days, the robber barons would apply strong-arm methods and all, but we have outgrown that and it has been exaggerated anyhow." In other words, typical, pious Foreign Service answers. And on the taped program, they followed that particular comment with a cut from the movie *The Cotton Club*, where a bunch of gangsters go into the club and machine gun down about 100 people plus tables, chairs, mirrors, bottles of liquor and chandeliers. When I saw the program on Leningrad TV, I thought it was hilarious. I thought, this is very clever journalism. And I never got burned for that inadvertent comedy act; the Department just took it as a reflection of the new times.

Sharon and I did an enormous amount of entertaining at the residence, and it was always well covered by television. One particularly memorable event occurred with Mstislav Rostropovich brought the National Symphony to Leningrad. This was Rostropovich's first visit to the Soviet Union since 1974 when he left and was later stripped of his citizenship. The concert they performed at the theater was sold out and there were hundreds of people outside the theater. Loudspeakers were placed outside so those who couldn't get in could hear the concert. The audience went wild; they kept calling him back for encore after encore. Finally the concert ended and we adjourned to a large reception at our residence. Rostropovich arrived, sat down at our piano—the one that Ashkenazy had said was like driving a tractor—and belted out *The Star Spangled Banner*. I know that he performs this from time to time, but in this venue it had real special meaning. There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Q: You were there when the Berlin Wall came down?

MILES: Yes, I was. That's right.

Q: How did that, I mean, was that seen as a seminal event or not?

MILES: Well, there were some related things. You remember, there was a large number of people who wandered across from either the border of Czechoslovakia or Hungary, I don't remember, exactly.

Q: Yes, they ended up in a West German compound and all.

MILES: Well, again, I think it was taken as this loss of Soviet power, this deterioration of the system and it lent itself to an air of confusion more than apprehension. There was a feeling that things were changing, that they, the Russians, were part of this change. "We don't know where it is going to end and we hope it's for the better, but it might not be for the better." But, yes, everyone was fascinated by that for sure. But at that time the Russians didn't exactly apply what they knew was happening in Berlin to themselves. They didn't think, well, gee, if they can do that in Germany, we can do it in Russia. I don't believe that thought of a fundamental change in the system really crossed too many minds. It was more like, Germany is Germany and a long way from us; we have more immediate problems, like where are we going to get something for our kids to eat tonight.

Q: Who was our Ambassador in Moscow?

MILES: It was Jack Matlock.

Q: How did Matlock use you and what was the relationship?

MILES: I was given a very strong, a very free hand and I appreciated that very much. Jack and I are quite different people but I worked for him three times in my career and we always got along very well. I respect him very much. His intellect, his language skills and his scholarship raise him way beyond the level of the average diplomat.

I used to go down to Moscow periodically and report in, you know, attend the country team meeting, and meet with the Ambassador and with others. Usually I would stay with Matlock in Spaso House and we would talk at breakfast. Then I would make the rounds in the Embassy and then go on back to Leningrad. Basically we were doing a good job of reporting what was going on in Leningrad and he just wanted to be sure that we had everything we needed in the way of resources and that we were covering things adequately which I believe we were.

I did try hard to keep Embassy Moscow civilians out of the Baltic States. You remember our policy at that time was that the U.S. Ambassador was not allowed to visit the Baltic States. This was because the United States never recognized the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. Ever since the War, the Consul General in Leningrad was the highest level American official who was allowed to go there. When I went there, I would fly the American flag on the car so that everyone would know that I was there. Of course, I had no problem with the defense attachés from the Embassy going. I just wanted to know when they were going and what they intended to do there, so we worked that out easily enough. But as for the Embassy civilians, people from the Political Section or the Economic Section or whatever, I told Matlock and he sort of grudgingly agreed, that we could best handle that kind of reporting out of the Consulate General and that I did not want to complicate our sometimes delicate lines of communication over in the Baltics by tripping over every Tom, Dick and Harry from the Embassy. The Embassy people, the people in the reporting sections, wanted desperately to go over there because a lot of things were happening in the Baltics and they wanted to observe it and report on it.

We had a crackerjack team of people working at the Consulate General, mostly young officers but a few mid-career people. Our front office was managed by an amazingly resourceful and hard-working person, Linda Price, who later would accompany me to three embassies when I became Ambassador. And three of the officers later became ambassadors themselves.

Q: Okay. Let's talk about the Baltic States and what was happening while you were there.

MILES: Well, all hell was breaking loose. I can't give you a precise timeline for each country, but the spirit of nationalism and even of independence was definitely in the air. Each one of the three separate Baltic States—and they are really quite different, their languages are different, they represent different cultures, they look to different foreign influences in their history, and so on. But in any case, each one of them had a pretty well developed nationalist, opposition movement. And, again, I don't recall, I would have really have to do some research to come up with the exact chronology, but the nationalists had seized control of the Estonian parliament and established checkpoints to keep Russians from coming in and ousting them. In Lithuania, Russian tanks had actually surrounded the parliament building which the Lithuanian nationalists had taken over. This was a very dangerous situation which could easily have come to an armed confrontation. For months, you had the Soviet tanks surrounding the parliament building with their guns pointed inward at the building. Then you had check points near the entrances to the building, manned by nationalists with red armbands and rifles and shotguns over their shoulder. When you went into the building there would be these sleepy guys sitting around, you know, asleep in an armchair or something with a rifle, a hunting rifle or a shotgun propped up on their lap. Always a fuggy atmosphere in there—the air was full of cigarette smoke, dirty coffee cups everywhere and so on. I thought it had a certain resemblance to the Smolny Institute in 1917.

Those were very dramatic days and as the situation heated up around, I suppose 1990, I began to go over increasingly often. At this time, the National Security Council—through the State Department—asked us to keep a continuous presence in each one of the Baltic States, which was damned difficult because I had a very small staff. For security reasons, we always sent two officers at a time and at least one of them had to come back to Leningrad periodically and write the reports. Consequently there was a lot of pressure from the working stiffs in the Embassy in Moscow to use that as an excuse to send their political officers and their economic officers over to "help out". I didn't want that to happen because I wanted to maintain a fairly tight control on what our people were doing in the Baltics and what we were reporting. So what I did was to ask non-POL/ECON officers to take part in all this to help stretch our manpower. So, the Public Affairs Officer or his deputy would go over, the Administrative Officer or the General Services Officer would go over; if they had a diplomatic passport, I threw them into the fray. They would report dramatic developments that might be taking place by phone. The KGB allowed that—probably because, in that way, they would know what we had been able to find out. But in order to do a real report back to Washington, the officers had to come back and write their cable out in longhand and send it up to Helsinki by courier to be typed in Helsinki and sent out that way. You see, our security system in Leningrad had been compromised some time before. Of course, at all overseas locations, we were told to assume that, with the exception of a few "cleared" spaces, the buildings we occupied were subject to penetration by hostile—or even friendly—foreign intelligence agencies, all the more so in the Soviet Union. While I was Consul General, a TDY security engineer actually discovered the listening devices which had been embedded in the construction materials in the walls of our building ever since its modernization 15 years or earlier. As an immediate result, we lost our ability to type and transmit classified material. We could send unclassified stuff out of Leningrad but classified reports had to

be written down by hand and then carried up to Helsinki by diplomatic courier. We had a dedicated secretary up there and the poor woman had to struggle with our sometimes hurriedly written messages, full of foreign names and places in four different languages, and produce the classified reports which Washington and Embassy Moscow were eagerly waiting for.

Q: How did you get it to Helsinki?

MILES: We had couriers who would go back and forth. Helsinki was good enough to send people down most of the time to take care of these classified bags. I think they got a kick out of it—sort of like a visit to the front lines. And also we were sending our people up to Helsinki periodically to pick up our regular mail. Anyone with a diplomatic passport can be designated as a diplomatic courier to carry classified material on a specific trip. We were used to that arrangement because we had always carried the unclassified diplomatic pouch and the personal mail bag back and forth from Helsinki.

Q: How were you received by the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians?

MILES: Oh, they loved these demonstrations of support. I mean, they loved nothing more than to see that big American car with the flag come rolling up between the tanks in Lithuania, for example. And frankly, even some of the communist politicians were feeling the spirit of the times. I remember talking to Arnold Rüütel who held the highest position in the political structure of Estonia at that time. We had a good relationship and I always saw him when I went to Estonia. I remember going out of his office once and walking around in the garden with him; he showed me a pistol he kept in his pocket. And he said, "You know, this isn't going to be like 1940 when the Soviets occupied our country. We know what happened then and this time I'm not going to go without a fight!" It was a very moving moment, and frankly all I could offer Rüütel and people like that was moral support. The official U.S. policy was always to support the independence of the Baltic States and we were certainly consistent in that regard. But we also had to be careful not to make false promises to the nationalist leaders. If the Soviet authorities had decided to crush these nationalist movements by force, and that was a very real possibility, there was not a hell of a lot which the United States could have done about it. So I was reasonably discreet in what I was doing and I made sure that my officers understood the delicate role we were playing. But we were certainly showing support for these national aspirations of the people in the Baltics and I think that is what Washington liked. Washington wanted to be able to say—for example, if the Soviet government had protested our activities in the Baltic States, Washington could have said, quite honestly, "Well, Miles doesn't have orders to do this; he's just doing this on his own. We'll talk to him about it and calm him down." But in the absence of that criticism from Moscow, which never came, by the way, Washington was happy enough to be able to tell the Baltic-Americans here in the United States—constituents who vote—that the Consul General is over there, he's showing the flag, literally. He's in touch with the nationalist leaders. We are doing everything we can to stay on top of this situation.

So everybody was happy pretty much, except, I suppose, the Soviet authorities, but the Soviet authorities never complained. Well, they had a lot on their hands at that time—economic collapse, unrest in Azerbaijan, in Georgia. It was an amazing time.

Q: Would you, for example with the tanks surrounding the Lithuanian parliament building, I mean, would you just drive up there and say here I am?

MILES: Yes, although I admit, this was always a nerve-wracking experience.

Q: Well, this was a provocative act.

MILES: Well, it was a provocative act. And, again, because of the breakdown of the previous system of control, the Finnish Television was often there and Leningrad Television was often there. They would photograph me doing this and it would be shown on television—and, again, no protest from the Soviet authorities.

There were several messages here. First of all, the Soviet authorities were allowing this to happen, they allowed me to do it and then they allowed the video people to be there and film it, and most amazing, they allowed it to be shown. Truly amazing. And I don't understand it to this day except I think people in positions of higher authority realized that times were changing and they were afraid of being on the wrong side. And Moscow center—the government, the Politburo, the organs of force—was not issuing firm instructions. And out in the field, with some very dramatic and bloody exceptions, the Soviet political, police and military authorities didn't know what to do. Maybe the officials and officers on the spot were afraid of taking unauthorized action and being punished by their own leaders. Well, I really don't know what they were thinking sitting in their offices or in those tanks. Of course, this ambiguous situation was not without its dangers.

In January 1991 I had three officers, an unusually large number, who happened to be in Riga, Latvia, when a rather famous incident occurred. This was right after the violence that had already occurred around the television tower in Lithuania.

Q: They sent some special Soviets, except—

MILES: They were special police; they were the so-called OMON [*Otryad Militsii Osobogo Naznacheniya*] police units, which were kind of like a SWAT team—guys with black ski masks over their faces who were not terribly concerned with human rights or anything like that. Well, I guess some of them just became incensed over these nationalist activities that were taking place so they went on a little bit of a rampage. It was never clear to me to what degree this was sanctioned by a local commander, let alone by anybody in Moscow. I don't think that Gorbachev ordered it. If Moscow had ordered something like this up, it would have been on a bigger scale. But in any case, these fellows came rampaging into one of the streets in downtown Riga. At one end of the street—it was a street about three blocks long bordering a park. A hotel was on one side of the street near one end; the Ministry of Justice or of Interior, I don't recall which, was

at the other end. They opened fire on the Ministry building with automatic weapons and also managed to kill some people in an adjacent park. It wasn't clear why they were shooting at the people in the park. Maybe the people in the park were killed accidentally; I don't know. Anyhow several people died that night.

Then they came up the street to the hotel where our people were staying; this was in the evening, after dark, as I remember. Well, as luck would have it, the President of Latvia was having a private dinner back in the recesses of the hotel. One of the OMON fellows came in to the lobby of the hotel with his automatic weapon. My officers were up on the mezzanine behind some glass panels, and the President's bodyguard had just come out from the room where the President was having dinner to see what was going on, all this shooting and all, and he happened to be up on the mezzanine with his pistol out when the OMON fellow came into the hotel lobby. I'm not sure who opened fire first. Happily neither of them hit anyone. The OMON fellow opened fire with his AK-47, kind of spraying a whole string of rounds up the staircase and onto the mezzanine area. My officers were up there on the relatively small mezzanine where, thank God, there was a large square column, so they formed a kind of a snake line behind that column where they were reasonably protected from this automatic weapons fire.

When they came back to Leningrad, I had our people print up a little badge for them on a laminated plastic card with a pin on it and it read, "Diplomat Hero, Third Class"—for coming under hostile, communist fire in Riga, Latvia, on such and such a day. And I signed it and gave it to them at a staff meeting. I think it was the best award they ever got in their lives. And they asked, "What do you have to do in order to get Second Class?" I said, "Well, for Second Class, you have to be wounded." And they said, "OK. What do you have to do to get First Class?" I said, "First Class is only awarded posthumously." They said, "We'll take Third Class!" True story.

Q: We were pretty much just plain observers to this, weren't we?

MILES: We were observers and providing mild encouragement. We never sat down with the nationalist leaders and planned out what they should do next, what provocative act they should do next or anything like that. But we would say things like, "The White House—we'll make sure that the White House is informed of your activities. Everyone is very proud of you. You are a great credit to your nation. We wish you the best of luck and we'll see you again next week." It would be more like that.

Q: Were we concerned, you know, sort of with the 1956 Hungarian uprising and all that we weren't getting too — pushing revolutionaries too far, who would then end up in harm's way? Was this—?

MILES: It was always on my mind and I didn't want to put the American government in that fix again. I felt that we successfully walked that fine line. I was certainly aware of the 1956 events; I didn't want to lend them any false hopes. And so sometimes when they would talk about declarations of independence or whatever, I'd say, "Look, the U.S. policy doesn't recognize your incorporation into the Soviet Union but we do believe in a

peaceful resolution of these issues." I urged them to maintain the peaceful evolution of their nationalist aspirations. I tried really hard not to lead them out on some kind of a limb that might break and which we could not support.

Q: How about the other, particularly Western powers: Germans, Brits, French and all. Were they involved in it or what were they up to?

MILES: They would come periodically, including people from their Embassies, because in Leningrad those Consulates General were very tiny—much smaller than ours. The Brits didn't even have a Consulate General in Leningrad. The others would have maybe two or three officers in Leningrad and they would spend most their time doing consular or commercial work. Sometimes they would visit the Baltics but they would more often send in people from their embassies in Moscow. So, they would come periodically and our officers in the field would usually meet with them and compare notes.

Q: Were the Finns—how active were they?

MILES: Quite active, more so than the others. And they had very good people in Leningrad.

Q: At that time could you differentiate between Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians?

MILES: Oh, quite. In fact, I think almost the only time when there was anything like a unified movement was this famous human chain that they formed; I think it was in the fall of 1989. I had been invited down to Vilnius by a Lithuanian fellow I had met at Harvard who wanted me to observe the human chain. So Sharon and I went down together to do that. And when we arrived on the scene with our friend, he, of course, joined it, and everyone said to us, you must join too. I thought that was maybe pushing the envelope. I didn't go down there in order to do that and I didn't think that this was really appropriate behavior for a diplomat, but quite frankly, in the circumstances, I didn't see any way not to do it. It was all linked hands, you see, all the way across the three Baltic States and you could see the KGB people driving up and down the street taking photographs and video, so when I would see them coming along, I would raise my hand and my friend's hand or Sharon's hand to cover my face or turn aside so that at least I would not be emblazoned all over the TV or whatever. But, you know, the Soviets never complained about that, not even to our Ambassador privately, and I didn't make a big deal out of it. I never mentioned it to any of the nationalist leaders. I didn't feel comfortable doing that, to tell you the truth; I thought that was going a little bit too far for a diplomat, but I just didn't see a way out of it at the time. And that was about the only demonstration that I saw of concerted activity among the three.

In fact, you could see the opposite phenomenon. Believe it or not, as the independence movement continued to develop momentum, toll gates and customs houses began to appear on the major highways connecting the different Baltic states. Now, this was pretty silly. Technically, these were just administrative borders; I mean there hadn't been national borders there since 1940. Anyhow, someone—the local authorities, I

guess—began to put up these little World War II-type customs houses with the diagonally striped paint, because they really wanted to demonstrate their "sovereignty". So they immediately erected customs barriers—basically against each other. That was one of the first things they did as "national" entities.

Basically, as far as I could tell, each one was operating on a little different basis—along similar lines, but reading about each others' activities pretty much in the media and then maybe letting that influence their own activities or not. The Estonians, while they certainly had their difficulties and their fears, because they were very near Leningrad but very near Finland too, and were a much smaller population, probably a million-and-a-half—and half of that ethnic Russians—so they were in a little tighter, dicier situation. They actually signed a treaty of sorts with the Soviet Union and as a result they were not subject to the same degree of armed pressure that the people in Latvia and the people in Lithuania were.

Q: Did the Estonian and Lithuanian and Latvian communities in the United States play any role? Were you getting people coming back at that time or not?

MILES: Not much of a role. There were a couple of expats there who had come back to help out in this nationalist revival that was taking place; one was later accused of being a KGB informant, in fact. I don't know what the truth was in that case. But no, not at that time, not a whole lot. A wave of people returned after the collapse of the Soviet Union and some were elected or appointed to positions of pretty high authority, including President in one case and Minister of Defense in another. But at the time I was there, there were very few such people playing a political role; you could count them on the fingers of one hand.

Q: What were you getting from the Russians in Leningrad about these developments?

MILES: It was quite interesting; that's a good question. I didn't bother asking the authorities about this because I knew what the answer would be. But what I got from the democratic Russians was very interesting. It was basically, "We don't really care what happens over there. They have never considered themselves part of the Soviet Union; they were reluctant members of the Russian empire. Lenin himself let them go back in 1918. We really don't care." But then they would add gratuitously, "We do care about Crimea!" They were quite exercised about Crimea, which Khrushchev had given away to Ukraine, you remember. And people in Leningrad felt much more strongly about the fact that Russia no longer possessed Crimea than they did about the fact that they had pretty much lost control in the Baltic States. It was quite interesting. And Estonia was no more than 50 miles from Leningrad, quite near, but it could have been on the moon as far as the people in Leningrad were concerned.

I had a memorable Fourth of July event in my residence. Actually, that year I had two Fourth of July events; this must have been in 1990 although it could have been 1991. Sharon and I had a pre-July Fourth sit-down dinner to which we invited the presidents and the foreign ministers of the nationalist governments in each of the three Baltic States

and I think most of them came. That was a very emotional day, I must say. Lots of heartfelt toasts to liberty and freedom. We invited a few Russians but not very many; only people that we knew would not be offended by all that was going on. And we invited some of the Leningrad-based diplomats and my own people, of course. There were some really very emotional remarks that were made on their part about their gratitude for the measure of support which we had shown them and which the United States had always shown them and the fact that we were here celebrating the American independence and so forth. So that went over very well indeed. I didn't clear this with the State Department beforehand because I doubted that they would approve, although they liked our reporting cable on the event. The next day I had my regular Fourth of July reception for the officials and the people from Leningrad itself.

Q: Did these states become independent? That was after your—

MILES: I would have to do my research but they had declared their renewed independence. See, they felt they always had been independent, that they had been illegally taken over and puppet governments had been established. But they did issue declarations of renewed independence even while the Soviet Union was still in existence. But I would have to check the facts to see which state did what and when, exactly.

Q: Okay. Well then, Dick, did you want to put anything in here? What else do you want to talk about on this period of time?

MILES: Well, let me think about that.

Q: Okay.

MILES: We just haven't quite finished that.

Q: Because we haven't quite finished. We've been talking about the Baltics.

MILES: Yes. And I'd like to say a few words about the coup attempt—the putsch, as it's called—which occurred in the fall of '91 after I left. I think the prior activities of the Consulate General played a positive role in helping to form the Leningrad reaction to the putsch.

Q: Okay, today is the 3rd of May, 2007. Dick, well, do you want to talk about the—.

MILES: Just to close out the conversation of a couple of weeks ago. While I had left Leningrad in the summer of '91, I followed very closely the events that occurred there and I wished I were there, of course. These events were pretty exciting. And Leningrad, I do believe, having read a lot about it and having gone back and talked to some of the Russians who were leaders in Leningrad at that time, I think Leningrad helped to keep the Soviet Union heading toward a democratic solution of its many problems. The Deputy Mayor of Leningrad, Vyacheslav Shcherbakov, was a good man. He was a former nuclear submarine commander and had eventually reached the rank of Admiral. I had many

useful and serious conversations with him while I was still in Leningrad. I loved his comment on the Chernobyl disaster: “The Chernobyl reactor was safe enough, but they [the engineers] acted as though they were tending a samovar!” He was conservative, as you can imagine, but he was very intelligent and was an independent thinker. He was still important in the Communist Party apparatus and my understanding is that, in the early hours of the putsch, he played a big role in convincing the Commander of the Leningrad Military District, General Samsonov, to stop the tanks that had begun to move toward the city in accordance with the orders that had come from Moscow. Samsonov, who I also knew and liked, was initially on the side of the conspirators in Moscow.

Now, the democratic Mayor, Sobchak, was out of town at the time. According to one account, Putin played a role in finding him and bringing him back to Leningrad. According to another firsthand account, Shcherbakov did this. I don’t know which version is correct; most likely, they worked together. In any case, if Shcherbakov had gone along with Samsonov—who, after all, had the tanks at his disposal—if he had gone along with the request of the putsch leaders and had brought the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs people along with him, it might have been quite a different story for Mr. Yeltsin and the crowd down in Moscow. Leningrad is the second largest city in Russia, it’s a huge city, and because of the significance of what the Leningrad leaders did in defying the coup leadership, and all of this was covered on Leningrad television, pretty much everyone nationwide was aware that in Leningrad there was serious opposition to the coup attempt. I do believe that this was very important to Yeltsin and the leaders of the opposition in Moscow and encouraged them to stand fast there as well. The whole history of the world might have changed if things had gone a little bit differently.

During my time in Leningrad all of us on the Consulate General team worked very hard to cultivate the liberal democratic crowd and the nationalist Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian leaders. As Americans this was the natural thing for us to do but we also cultivated the conservative crowd—the Army, the Navy, the Police and the KGB chief. I believe I was the first American Consul General to call on the KGB chief in Leningrad, maybe the first to call on the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs there in Leningrad, in other words the Chief of Police, in Leningrad and so on. Sharon and I became good friends of the Colonel, later General, in charge of the City Garrison—a historically and militarily significant post. People like this and their spouses had been to our residence, not once but many times. So we didn’t just spend our time talking to people we agreed with. We spent a lot of time talking to people that we did not necessarily agree with. They would come to the residence for receptions and lunches and dinners, concerts, film showings, fashion shows and whatnot, and their wives would come. I very well remember one time when I got a copy of the Schwarzenegger film, *Red Heat*, and showed it to the brass of the Leningrad Ministry of Internal Affairs. We had a great movie theater right in the residence with synchronized 16 and 35mm projectors in a sound booth. An MVD General even came down from Moscow to see this movie. His comment? “We changed that style of epaulets last year.” And, “That’s a ridiculous pistol. We don’t use anything like that.” This, despite my best effort ahead of time to remind everyone that this was a Hollywood movie and did not necessarily reflect reality either in America or in the Soviet Union. The General did loosen up over drinks after the movie.

I mean, it was a different—it was a very dramatic time in the Soviet Union at that moment. I think, and in fact Sharon and I have often talked about it, and I do believe that even though I have been ambassador or chief of mission four times, principal officer six times, if you will—I still think that the consulate general assignment, 1988 to 1991, was the best that I ever had. Those were exciting times. We had an excellent team there and I think we were doing the right thing.

Q: You were mentioning all the time Leningrad. Was it called Leningrad when you were there?

MILES: Yes. Public opinion was divided on the issue of whether to change it. There was a reputable public opinion poll that was taken after the democrats took control of the Leningrad city Soviet—while it was still the Soviet Union, in other words. And in that poll, as I recall, it was something like 55 percent preferred to keep the name Leningrad while 45 percent would like to have seen it go back to St. Petersburg. And the reason is World War II. Everyone knows about the blockade of Leningrad and the incredible suffering of the population. It was not the Blockade of St. Petersburg. It was the Blockade of Leningrad.

Q: The 900 days of—

MILES: Yes. Well, it's known even in the West let alone in Leningrad itself. The name "Leningrad" itself was just part of their fabric, their very being, so it was not an easy thing for them to agree to change. But I forget exactly when it was changed. It was either after the failed putsch or a little later after the collapse of the Soviet Union; I just don't recall. At any rate, soon after I left, within six months after I left, the citizenry had changed their mind. The majority now favored changing the name and the Leningrad city Soviet agreed to change the name to St. Petersburg. Although I believe that neither the Leningrad Military District nor the Leningrad Oblast' [the region around St. Petersburg] has changed their title.

Q: Well now, you left there when?

MILES: I don't recall exactly: the summer of '91. I think it was July of '91.

Q: Where did you go?

MILES: I went to Berlin. It was an unusual assignment and a very short one, unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how you interpret it. The Berlin Wall had come down about a year before that and so the two Germanys were united. The German government decided early on that all of the missions in West Berlin had to close, legally, and all the embassies in former East Berlin had to close, legally, and then each country could decide for itself what it wanted to do about its representation in Berlin. It could open an embassy office, in which case, in essence, that office would be subordinate to Bonn, still the capital of Germany, and the ambassador, of course, would remain in Bonn

until the German capital could be moved to Berlin. Or a country could open up a consulate general in Berlin and then it would be subordinate to Land Berlin and would have the same relationship to the embassy in Bonn that any consulate general would have. Most of the big powers went the embassy office route; the Russians did—still the Soviets at that time—and we did. And so Harry Gilmore, who had been the Mission Chief in West Berlin, became the Head of the Embassy Office in Berlin. I loved the title in German: *"Leiter der Aussenstelle der Botschaft"*—literally, "Head of the Outpost of the Embassy". Harry kept his residence in West Berlin, where he had been living as Mission Chief, but he did have to move his office over from West Berlin to the former Embassy building in East Berlin.

When I came to replace Harry in the summer of '91, I thought it made more sense for me to live in West Berlin too, because that is where most of our business and most of our contacts were. But the State Department owned the residence property in East Berlin and they wanted to turn the property in West Berlin back to the German government. I thought this was a big mistake and I said so even while I was still in Leningrad, but, despite my pushing and prodding, I was forced to move into the residence of the former Ambassador in East Berlin. I had no problem working in East Berlin. I thought that was perfectly appropriate, and we kept the consular function and the administrative function over in the old Mission in West Berlin. We had our warehouse over in West Berlin, so we were using both the old and the new facilities. But Sharon and I did move into the former Ambassador's residence in East Berlin. And we had a very hard time getting West Berliners to come over to attend receptions or dinners or lunches or whatever. Some would come, but reluctantly. Many came, saying that that was the first time they had ever been into East Berlin even though the Wall had been down for a year. Palpably, the Wall was still there and anybody could tell when you went back and forth across the former border where the Wall had been and in many cases, physically, the Wall was still there. Some people refused to come over at all; they didn't feel comfortable going over into the East and they knew that all of Germany was united, but they preferred not to come and so this situation did present some difficulties at first. In the end it worked out pretty well and we had a lot of fun, in essence, helping to introduce West Berliners to East Berlin and to former East Germany. I had responsibility not just for U.S. policy in East Berlin but now all of Berlin and all of former East Germany with the slight exception of the *Länder* where the major cities of Leipzig and Dresden were. We were getting ready to open a consulate general down in Leipzig and while, nominally, I had authority there, in fact, Todd Becker, the guy who was going to become the Consul General was already on the scene down there so I deliberately put off visiting those cities thinking I had plenty of time to do it later. Todd would come and stay with me from time to time, do his reports, etc. So I had a good idea of what was going on in that important region. Sharon and I stayed busy enough with all the rest of former East Germany to explore.

There were not any particular difficulties between us and the Germans and I had a good team at the Embassy Office. So Sharon and I spent a lot of time traveling around in former East Germany, including going to places where no American diplomat had ever been, like Peenemunde, the former rocket base in the Nazi period. The Soviets and then the East Germans had made that into an airbase and after the Wall came down, the West

Germans used it as an incredibly large parking lot, I guess you would call it, onto which they brought every military truck and vehicle known to man from the former East German military stocks. It looked like a Richard Scarry military vehicle book for children because there was everything there from bridge laying trucks to smoke producing trucks to thousands of troop carrying trucks and the equivalent of our jeeps and that kind of thing. When you went up into the former control tower and looked out over this vast expanse, as far as the eye could see, there would be these now-obsolete and abandoned former East German trucks and other vehicles. And offshore, not very far from the airbase, there were a great many of the warships of the former East German Navy. It was an eerie sight, just row after row of these relatively small but still deadly military ships just rusting away. The German government was trying to sell these ships and the contents of the vehicle park to buyers out in the Third World.

On another excursion, I remember visiting an airfield not too far from Berlin where the West Germans had taken charge of the military airbase. A West German lieutenant colonel was in charge of the former East German pilots who were still there and still flying their Mig-29s, all of them now amalgamated into the German military service although they were still wearing their East German uniforms. Of course they had all been brought up in East Germany and they were still a little bit bewildered about everything that was going on. And so to observe all this and to talk directly to people who were making history every day was fascinating.

I was also able to visit Goering's former Luftwaffe command bunker, which was again not far from Berlin. I believe I was the first American ever to be in that bunker. It was down a country road not too far from Berlin. You drive along and turn into a lane that looks like any lane leading to some small farmhouse and, rather quickly, you come upon a relatively small house. It looked like someone's residence. You go in and then you go down, down, down, down, down in a large elevator and there is this enormous mini city underground. It had been built in the Nazi period and first the Soviets and then the East Germans had taken over and modernized it so that it was capable of resisting nuclear attack and chemical attack—huge pneumatically sealed doors, and the whole thing, or at least the central part of it, located on top of gigantic springs so that if a nuclear device went off in the air and the air pressure increased, the pressure would just push everything down against these giant springs and then the whole, enormous thing would come back up as the pressure eased. Now, that was truly amazing. The briefing that I received about how the facility was constructed and its function, all that was from an East German major still wearing his East German uniform. I asked him what was the strangest thing that had happened to him since the Wall had come down and the two Germanys had been united, and he said, "Briefing you, sir." I thought that was a good answer and I appreciated his candor.

Q: What was your impression of the police function? You know, there were two types of police. One was sort of the secret police but the other one is the police that keep the traffic moving and maintain law and order. How did that work?

MILES: I didn't sense any problem at all from either the East or the West German police people. Of course, the vast bulk of the East German secret police simply lost their positions. For a long time, ever since 1945, we had technical liaison with the West Berlin police and after the Wall came down we simply extended that function to the East German police as well. These were professional police people whose job it was to maintain contact and, frankly, I don't know if the liaison officers are still there or not because they would be less needed in a united Germany. But at the time that I was there, when the essence of the two separate Germanys was still in the air, the liaison officers did play a useful role. I never sensed from them or from my own meetings with the police officials any difficulty whatsoever. The German police of various agencies were just carrying out their professional duties and, like most Germans, they were a little bit unsure of what was going on or how it would all work out, but they were trying to do the best they could. Of course they had money to do it. That is the big difference with the transformation in Germany compared to all these other former communist countries: they had a lot of money available to help bring about a transformation and unification of the two societies. Still, there were difficulties in terms of psychological attitude. Germans wrote a lot about that so I was reading in those wonderful German newspapers and magazines lots of stories about the difficulties between the East German and the West German attitudes toward work, toward family, toward home, toward friends, toward leisure time, toward foreign affairs, as far as that goes, and I suppose that this difference between the people from the two Germanys will take a couple of generations to work itself out.

The Germans in general, but certainly in Berlin, love to have formal balls. So every year around Christmas/New Year's, there would be one formal ball after another. I got permission from the State Department, as my predecessors had done, to accept the free tickets to these balls so that I could go. The tickets cost $400 or $500 a piece, and while I might have been able to afford to go to one myself, I remember going to seven of them over the season and I could not have afforded that. There would be the Policemen's Ball and the Lawyers' Ball and God knows what. I remember one of the fanciest ones I ever went to was the ADAC [*Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobile-Club*], the German Automobile Club Ball. Chancellor Kohl and his wife had attended the ADAC Ball as well and it happened that Sharon and I were going down in the elevator to leave at the same time that he and his wife were in the elevator, so it was just the four of us plus his bodyguard. I spoke tolerable German, so I said, "Well, I guess we are all going home." And he said, "Yes, we are going home tonight and I hope you had a nice time." And so on. And I said, "Well, the difference, *Herr Bundeskanzler* [Chancellor], is you are going west and I am going east; I live in Pankow." Pankow is the district in East Berlin where all the important East German officials had lived. The Chancellor and his wife got a kick out of that.

Q: Did you find yourself acting sort of as the matchmaker between East and West Germans?

MILES: No. No, they didn't need it. Well, matchmaker in the sense of—

Q: Well, I mean just bringing them together and—

MILES: Yes, OK. Just introducing people to each other. When we had visiting Americans who were interested in whatever—you know how Americans travel so much? I always liked to have them out to the residence, and if there was time we'd have a dinner or a reception or whatever they had time to do. We'd invite both West and East Germans to these events. So in that sense, yes, we did try to put people together. But the Germans were doing a lot of that too, so it was not a unique role that we were playing. I think maybe the only unique role I played in that regard was when the winemakers, Wente Brothers from California, came to one of the big agricultural fairs that was being held in West Berlin, which they had done since time out of mind. I suggested to them that this time they bring extra wine and that we have a reception at my house in the former East Berlin; a converted school. It was a big house, and we would invite some of the East German restaurateurs and wine makers so that they could have some exposure to American wine and American wine-making. Sharon and I were incredibly lucky to have one of the best chefs in Berlin, Werner Henkensiefken, at that time and he thought it was a fantastic idea. So we really made a nice evening out of that. That was the first and only time in my life I have actually seen a bottle of wine as big as one which the Wente Brothers brought out. It was one of those huge monster bottles of wine that you can't even handle. It's called a Nebuchadnezzar or something like that. I don't know why they even bother to put it up like that; it's kind of a sales gimmick, I guess. Anyhow, the Wente Brothers thought this promotion was a wonderful idea and they really got into it in a big way. They brought out plenty of samples of every variety of wine that they produced. There was more wine than you could shake a stick at. My chef had prepared a groaning board of different German breads, cold cuts, cheeses, etc., and everyone thoroughly enjoyed this Lucullan event. Quite a few bottles were left over for my representational use, so all this worked out to everyone's advantage.

Q: How did you find relations with the Embassy in Bonn?

MILES: Well, fine. Ambassador Kimmitt, Bob Kimmitt, was Ambassador for most of the time I was in Berlin. And the Ambassador before that was Vernon Walters, the famous linguist, who had been Permanent Representative to the UN and spoke pretty much all the romance languages plus German and Russian and I don't know what else.

Q: Vernon Walters.

MILES: Vernon Walters, yes. And he was just on his way out when I arrived. Walters was a great fan of Germany and spoke quite decent German and I think he felt rather hurt, the way he was pushed out. I mean, for all ambassadors, eventually their time comes to an end and they have to leave, but Vernon Walters thought somehow he was exempt from that rule, that he would be treated with a little more respect and courtesy. It's a fatal flaw of a lot of ambassadors, including unfortunately, Ambassador Walters. Anyhow, when he came over to Berlin a few times before he had to leave, he was always friendly as a pup and very interested in what we were doing and encouraging and, I must say, I sympathized with him when he was literally pushed out the door.

But then Bob Kimmitt came and Kimmitt worked harder than anyone I have ever known in my life to be a good ambassador. He had served in Germany in the Army. He had been a professional military officer, so he spoke some German and he was working hard at it. And he is a perfectionist. I mean, he gives the word "perfectionist" real meaning so that sometimes it was a bit of a strain to handle his many visits to Berlin. Bonn was kind of dull compared to Berlin and both he and Vernon Walters liked very much to come over to Berlin. They had a little house there—the Ambassador kept a little residence there with a staff of a couple of people. Frankly, I thought that was kind of wasteful but that was the tradition in Berlin. I tried to borrow some of that staff too for use during my representational events but there was nothing doing on that, so they just sat there in between visits and twiddled their thumbs. They had the best jobs in Germany. But anyhow, Kimmitt made great use of the place and when he came over, there would be official programs, lunches, dinners, working breakfasts and whatnot, and he worked at all this very hard. I mean, he really covered the waterfront and he was very interested, also, in getting around East Germany. It was sometimes a race on my part to stay a step ahead of him. Sharon and I used to joke about it. I have a tendency to be a little bit lazy sometimes but I was not lazy in Germany, I will tell you. I had to run twice as hard just to keep up with Kimmitt and try to get out to these places before he would. I didn't want to have him be the one to introduce me to my own territory, you know.

Q: Yes.

MILES: So I really raced around that country. It's one of the reasons why Sharon and I did so much and saw so much on our own out there in such a short time. Trying to anticipate where Kimmitt might go next was not always an easy thing to do.

Q: What was the status of Soviet forces? Had they pulled out?

MILES: It was quite interesting because they were pulling out right in front of our eyes. I had a good relationship with the former Soviet Ambassador there, now reduced to being head of his Embassy Office. The Soviet Embassy Office was their huge former Chancery in East Berlin. I visited several of the military bases which the Soviet Army had just vacated where, and there is nothing novel about what I am going to say, but I saw with my own eyes how when they left, they would take, for example, the frame windows; they would literally take the window frame out of the wall—so you'd just be left with a hole in the wall where the window and the window frame and the window locks had been. They'd take the doorknobs and the hardware off of the door and leave the door but all the metal parts would be gone. They'd unscrew the electrical outlets and take out everything but the wire hanging from the outlet—just hanging there, a live wire hanging there. It was incredible what they would take. And the plumbing. What in the hell are you going to do with miles and miles of pipes from bathrooms and things, I have no idea but, boy, it all went onto the trucks and back to Mother Russia. And then at the same time these same Soviet military people were suffering because the Soviet system had almost totally broken down at that point. For example, we were still running Tempelhof Air Base as an air traffic control center and the Soviets had their airfield over in former East Berlin but

technically we were doing the air traffic control for all Berlin and so, to make this work, the Commander at Tempelhof, an Air Force Colonel, agreed to bring in a detachment of about 100 Soviet air traffic controllers and house them at the Tempelhof airfield and that worked very well indeed. There were also French and British air traffic controllers lingering on there so you had Americans, French, British and now Soviet air traffic controllers all under the nominal command of this American colonel. He found that the Soviet troops did not have adequate rations and had no money to buy anything over in West Germany. So he took what amounted to a little slush fund of his and fed the Soviet air traffic controllers for the duration of that program.

I had a reception at my house to commemorate the anniversary of the Berlin Airlift and we thought, well, times are changing, so as a courtesy, we will invite some of these Russians, the officers of the Soviet air traffic controller contingent out at Tempelhof. Some of the British and French people came all the way from England and France to attend this reception. These were people who had been with the Berlin Airlift back in 1948-49. At events like this, the American Commander of the Tempelhof Air Base would usually give the VIPs a metal replica of the *Luftbrücke* memorial, the air bridge memorial in Berlin. These were serious mementoes, the metal arch of the air bridge mounted on a wood base and weighing about three pounds. Anyhow, the American Commander actually gave the Commander of the Soviet air traffic controllers one of these *Luftbrücke* souvenirs. I thought it was just about the most ironic thing I ever saw in my life. And the Soviet Commander accepted it and was very grateful for it. I mean, times had changed and they were changing right in front of your eyes. It was an amazing thing.

Q: What was your impression of the economic decisions, the biggest one, of course, being the one for one currency exchange but other—but just what was being done from the West to bring East Germany into the economic system of the country? How did you see that working?

MILES: The West Germans did spend an enormous amount of money in that process. I had a pretty good relationship with Frau Breuel, who was the head of the *Treuhandanstalt* [German Government Privatization Agency], and who was working out of the old Reich Air Ministry in Berlin. It was ironic, I thought, that with all of the massive bombing that we had done in World War II we managed to avoid seriously damaging the enormous Reich Air Ministry and also Göring's wartime bunker. I don't know if they deliberately avoided them because they wanted to use them later or they just couldn't hit them. In any case they were still there and Frau Breuel was ensconced in that great example of fascist architecture, the former Reich Air Ministry. I always felt as though I was going back into a very unpleasant time when I walked through the huge doors of that building, but Frau Breuel was always very gracious—and also always very tired. She was a really decent woman who had a very bad press in Germany because you know when you start this privatization process in these former communist countries, it's going to be a messy business.

Q: Yes.

MILES: And especially the faster you are doing it, the messier it is. So a lot of money changed hands but also, in some cases, a lot of money did not change hands. There were accusations that valuable properties were being sold off for a pittance and so on. There were accusations of favoritism, but frankly, as far as I could tell—and I looked into it, and my people looked into it a lot because we were quite interested in it—there was no organized hanky panky on the part of the *Treuhandanstalt*. As far as I, as a layman, could tell, its operations were all very straight and aboveboard and I think the *Treuhandanstalt* did a magnificent job. But, as I said, Frau Breuel did get a very bad press in Germany.

Q: How long were you there?

MILES: Well, I was only there eight months because the Soviet Union collapsed in November/December of '91, and the countries formed on the basis of the republics of the former Soviet Union began to declare their independence and Baker, Secretary James Baker, wanted diplomatic representation out there like "Now!", so he sent Nick Salgo, Ambassador Salgo, on a whirlwind tour of all the new countries to find properties suitable for the chanceries and the ambassadors' residences. The ambassadors themselves were to follow in very short order. Nick, who was kind of a property czar in the State Department, was a wealthy Los Angeles real estate magnate who had been our Ambassador to Hungary. Happily, I knew Nick from when he had been the Ambassador to Hungary and I was in Belgrade as a junior officer. The Ambassador in Belgrade would send me out to the airport to meet Salgo when his private plane—well, I said he was wealthy—would touch down at the airport en route to Dubrovnik for the weekend. We renewed our acquaintance when he and his wife came for a visit when I was Consul General in Leningrad and they stayed at our residence. Anyhow, Baker sent Nick around to each one of these new independent states to sign leases for ambassadors' residences and chanceries. Poor Nick was out there about 24 hours in each one of these countries and signed millions of dollars worth of leases and whatnot and then the first tier of working level diplomats was sent out in mid-March of '92, which is pretty damn fast. I arrived in Baku on May 2, so they wasted no time in getting the ambassadors out there. I'd like to return to the story of Nick Salgo's property-acquisition trip to Baku later on.

I did want to mention one interesting event that occurred while I was in Berlin. Sharon had somehow gotten to know the Mayor of Köpenick, a historic town now located in East Berlin.

Q: There is a wonderful movie called Captain Von Köpenick.

MILES: That's right. Now, Köpenick used to be a separate little town, then it became a working class district of Berlin and it always had been kind of independent. Sharon and I liked it. We used to go down there, walk around and have lunch on a weekend. In short, there was a very pleasant old European atmosphere down there. Anyhow, Sharon somehow got to know the Mayor of Köpenick and he called her up one morning. We were on a road trip up north somewhere, I think, at one of the ports, Rostock, maybe, and he said, "We have been gathering relief supplies for Leningrad because the people there are in a very bad way." And we knew they were in a bad way because we had just left

there a few months earlier. Then he said, "The Soviet Air Force was going to fly this stuff to Leningrad for us but because of their more pressing needs, flying the troops back home and all that, they told us that they can't do it and they have no money for gas, for trucks or anything, and some of the stuff that we have collected is perishable—pharmaceuticals and some food items—so can you help us?" Sharon immediately said "Yes," and then she said to me, "Can we make this happen?" And I said, "How much stuff does he have?" Well, he had an enormous amount of this stuff. And I thought, well, how am I going to do this? I don't want to organize a land convoy—too complicated. We can probably do it with airlift but we'll need a couple of planes or maybe one very large airplane. And so to make a long story short, we got an American Air Force C-5 to fly in—

Q: Biggest—

MILES: —the biggest one we had—and load this stuff up and fly it on to Leningrad. And in order to do that, first of all, I had to get Ambassador Kimmitt's permission to proceed. That approval came immediately. Then the Air Force had to agree. They were actually eager to do it, it was kind of fun for them. This was a great PR thing. Now, we all know that nothing is simple in life so it turned out we had to get the Berlin Senat, the governing body of the city, to pass a waiver of the noise abatement and the anti-pollution requirements, and, of course, Berlin was going through a kind of a green phase right then. I remember being kind of shocked when I arrived in Berlin in '91 to find the grass growing wild in the median, you know, the space between the two sides of the boulevards and the reason was the Greens were in control of the politics there and they wouldn't allow the city to cut the grass. So it was a very green place.

Anyhow, the Berlin Senat agreed to waive all these restrictions for the C-5, an airplane which does make all the noise in the world and emits God knows how much pollution, and we had to get Tegel Airport, the main airport in West Berlin, to close down for three hours because of the size of this plane. And the Ambassador came over from Bonn, the band was there, the Mayor of Köpenick was there, the Mayor of Berlin, Diepgen, was there and it was really a big deal; a lot of fun, I must say, all the way around. And I don't know to what extent even a C-5 full of supplies helped the people of Leningrad. But it was a hell of a PR coup, I must say. I owe it all to Sharon and the U.S. Air Force—well, and to the good citizens of Köpenick who gathered all the stuff in the first place.

Q: Oh, boy. Well then, Azerbaijan. You were in Azerbaijan from when to when?

MILES: Well, I went directly there. May, 1992. I hardly touched go at all; I don't think I even came back to the States first. Sharon stayed in Berlin for the next three months because the State Department wasn't allowing spouses or dependents to accompany us at first. With the approval of the U.S. Senate, we were all sent out to our prospective posts before any kind of confirmation hearings were held. Everyone recognized that Baker was correct in trying to get people out there quickly. So all of us were just sent out from wherever we were. As I recall, I went straight there from Berlin and met with the very small U.S. team that had already arrived there. Robert Finn was the deputy and had been the Chargé for about six weeks and Philip Remler was the Political Officer—two

exceptional Foreign Service Officers. There was, literally, just a handful of other officers—12 total at that time—and we set up shop in this really ghastly hotel down on the Caspian Sea, called the Intourist Hotel. The hotel was about as lugubrious a place as I have ever seen; the architect who designed it had designed the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow and the hotel vaguely resembled the mausoleum. I lived in that hotel for 16 of the 18 months I was in Azerbaijan. Two-thirds of the light bulbs were burned out—and remained burned out. There were dead mice and rats in the hallways; I mean the whole system was falling apart. It was like something out of a Mad Max movie but, still, it was exciting stuff, as you can imagine. The Turkish and the Russian ambassadors also lived in this hotel.

By the time I arrived in Azerbaijan, about five months after the collapse of the Soviet Union, an anarchic and somewhat confusing situation had developed. The Armenians and the Azeris were fighting not just a war but an expanded civil war, with the Azeris and the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh fighting to gain and maintain control of Nagorno-Karabakh—a small, mountainous province of Azerbaijan located almost, but not quite, adjacent to the Azeri-Armenian border. The ethnic Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh wanted to take control of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territory. The Azeri population and the Azeri government were determined to resist this. The Armenian government and the Armenian diaspora, including in America, were backing the ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Former Soviet Army units were selling arms and supplies to anyone who would buy them. Atrocities had been committed by both sides and the war was not going well for the Azeris.

This was a very messy situation in its own right. But, meanwhile, in Baku, nationalist forces, political forces, had gathered around the parliament building and were conducting massive demonstrations round the clock—with banners and placards, people with loud speakers and whatnot all haranguing the government and demanding the resignation of the current leader, that is, the former communist leader, Ayaz Mutallibov, who had very temporarily returned to power. The mob wanted him out and they wanted a more vigorous prosecution of the war. Believe it or not, but the political situation was actually more complicated than this. I'm simplifying it.

I never actually met Mutallibov, who was beleaguered in the parliament building and who—well, it's a kind of complicated story, which I won't bother to recount here, but, basically, the nationalist forces seized control of the parliament building about two weeks after I arrived in Baku. Mutallibov, along with many of the deputies in the parliament, fled to Russia.

Both Robert Finn and Philip Remler had only been there a short time themselves but they had already scoped out the situation quite accurately and they had met with the leaders of the nationalist movement, the Popular Front it was called. The leader of the Popular Front, who later became the President of Azerbaijan, was Abulfaz Elchibey, and they knew him already and so they said to me, when I first arrived—and I didn't know Robert or Philip so we had to do a lot of this on faith in a way—they said, "It's very important that you go around immediately and meet Elchibey, even though he has no position

particularly. You don't need to say whether the United States is in favor of this pressure on the government or not in favor and you should stay pretty much neutral on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue because of the intricacy of the issue and the delicacy of that situation, but you really need to meet this fellow. He will become the President and it will be very important for you and for the United States if you have established that earlier relationship." And so I agreed and they took me off to Elchibey's brother's apartment where he was laying low. Obviously the authorities knew that he was there but they were not willing to make a whole lot of fuss about it because they didn't know how the game was going to go.

And so we knocked on the door of Elchibey's brother's very modest apartment. Elchibey answered the door himself. And in Azerbaijan and in much of that part of the world, the custom is you don't wear your shoes inside someone's house or apartment—you take them off and you walk around in your stocking feet or they had slippers there for you. And it was kind of an amusing incident. Here I am now, the Ambassador-designate to Azerbaijan for the first time in history, and here is a man who probably but not yet will be the President of Azerbaijan in this shabby apartment, and there is this confusion at the door over what am I going to do with my stocking feet? I am going to take my shoes off quickly enough—I had been briefed about that—but then what? Well, to make a short story short, Elchibey kicked his feet out of his slippers and insisted that I put his still warm slippers on my feet. And then we went in and had tea and discussed the affairs of the world. If that scene were portrayed in a movie, I don't suppose anyone would believe it.

Well then, shortly after that, within 10 days I suppose, there was what amounted to an almost bloodless coup. A few people were killed. I think one was accidentally crushed by an armored personnel vehicle and I think one other person got shot. Quite a few shots were fired; in fact, hundreds of rounds were fired but mostly up in the air. It was kind of a celebratory type of thing. But people were armed and it could have gone the other way if there had been serious armed resistance from within the parliament building. This would have been quite possible because people had weapons in there and they had guards and all that. But instead they melted away, they fled basically, and so the nationalist crowd took over the parliament, took over the Presidency, had a special election and Elchibey was elected. We and the Turks were strong supporters of Elchibey in his effort to try to bring about a democratic transformation of Azerbaijan. But it wasn't easy. The nationalist crowd had great ideals and looked to the United States as a model to be emulated but with a couple of exceptions, Isa Gambar, for example, they didn't have much in depth understanding of Western history or political thought or American history or anything else outside of the education they had received in the Soviet system. So, despite their belief that there was something better to be had and that we had the key to it, they were the products of their own environment and their own environment had been a communist environment. So, with the new government, there was constant intrigue and backstabbing and bullying and moments of sheer incompetence. You would obtain a ministerial position and your idea was how much graft can you draw out of that position rather than how much good can you do. Such things are not unknown in the West, of course, but there and at that time it was the norm.

Meanwhile the war with the Armenians, both in Nagorno-Karabakh and from Armenia proper, was still going on. Shooting was taking place, people were being killed, atrocities were being committed and rumors were swirling all around the place. While the executive branch in Washington tried to keep U.S. policy toward this region on an even keel, the U.S. Congress was not so balanced in its approach. The reason is quite simple. There are lots of Armenian-Americans, many of them quite influential, while there are very, very few Azeri-Americans. There are some Iranian-Americans who are actually ethnic Azeri but they tend not to identify with Azerbaijan so much. So the Azeri-Americans did not have very much political clout in the United States while the Armenian-Americans had a lot of political clout. As a result, the U.S. Congress, soon after I arrived there, passed Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. It's a notorious section which, in essence, prohibits U.S. government assistance to the government of Azerbaijan. We determined that if there could be purely private assistance, that would be allowed, either coming from America or going to purely private Azeri NGOs, which didn't exist at that time; in a way they had to be encouraged and created. That could be done and we did a little bit of that. And then later, after 9/11, long after I left Azerbaijan, the President was able to obtain a waiver to allow certain forms of assistance to Azerbaijan because of the needs of the situation following 9/11. But that was long after I had gone from the place.

Q: Could you kind of describe for somebody who will be reading this, sort of the geographic bounds of Azerbaijan? The makeup, the economy and all. Baku was the capital, wasn't it?

MILES: Right.

Q: But describe sort of what was going on there when you got there in '91.

MILES: There was not much going on of an economic nature with the exception of the oil and gas industry, which had been traditional for Azerbaijan. That is to say the oil had been the traditional mainstay of the economy; oil had been discovered there, well, the oil had always been there, of course. It used to seep out of the ground, it was so plentiful. But before the 19th century it was just used as a medicinal salve for camel sores or that kind of a thing, it was hardly used for anything. And then in the mid-19th century it became possible to refine the oil and turn it into kerosene for lighting and heating. Demand grew very rapidly. And so Baku became the world center of oil production for almost 100 years, really. Western financiers were involved in it, the Nobel brothers were involved in it, and others—there was even some American interest in it. But the natural gas, which often accompanies oil, was just flared off; no one quite knew what to do with it and so I suppose trillions of cubic meters of natural gas was just burned off or evaporated into the atmosphere over that period of time. And in fact even in the Soviet period, Azerbaijan, which has more than enough natural gas for its own needs, did not exploit its own natural gas, but rather imported gas from Turkmenistan. It was a great example of the Soviet economic mentality at work. But Azerbaijan did and still does produce a lot of oil and even in World War II it was the primary source for the petroleum

and the oil and the lubricants—the "POL"—for the Red Army, and Hitler himself wanted to get his hands on the Baku oil fields and came close to doing so. In fact, the Battle of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk were largely fought as defensive battles to keep the Germans from getting down to Baku and they never did reach Baku.

Baku also had a historic, political role because Stalin, who you remember was Georgian, did some of his early organizational work in the Baku oil fields and also in the Port of Batumi over in Georgia because in the imperial Russian period and even in the Soviet period there was a very small diameter pipeline that went over to Batumi, carrying some of that kerosene I mentioned, and there also was the Baku-Batumi railroad, which had been in existence since shortly after the middle of the 19th century, which carried a lot of the Baku oil to Western markets. And Stalin was an organizer both in the Baku oil fields and among the Batumi port workers, so he got some of his basic training, I guess you could say, as a result of those masses of industrial workers in both Azerbaijan and Georgia at that time.

But having said that, by 1991 the Azeri oil fields and the oil refineries had been allowed to deteriorate to a really dangerous point. The Soviet Union had been falling apart not for months but for years and…

Q: This is tape six, side one, with Dick Miles. Yes.

MILES: So things in the oil fields and in the refineries had deteriorated to the point where they were actually unsafe, certainly environmentally unsafe, by the time I arrived in the spring of 1992. And there was virtually no other industry to speak of. Azerbaijan had traditionally produced grapes, which had been used either to make wine locally or more often had been shipped off to Russia to be made into wine or distilled into something stronger. There had been some cotton growing that was really not being done any longer since the fields were leached out by over fertilization and poor irrigation. There were porcelain factories and carpet factories that had virtually stopped running long ago. It was really pathetic to go through them at that time. There was an air conditioner plant in Baku which was producing a very small quantity of decent air conditioners but not enough to bring any particular income to the country of Azerbaijan.

Q: Who were the workers? Because I had a—at one point I was in Kyrgyzstan a couple of years later and, you know, I watched there that the workers were mostly Russians and the bureaucrats were Kyrgyz. And I was wondering how did that work in Azerbaijan?

MILES: Well, they were Azeri, pretty much.

There had been a large Armenian population in Azerbaijan, it had been there historically, and—this is a complicated story, which I won't bother to recount here—but there had been periods of both tension and periods of peaceful coexistence between the Armenian and the Azeri populations over the decades, certainly since the turn of the century, the 19th to the 20th century. The original oil workers in the Baku fields were pretty much Armenian but over the decades they had been more or less replaced by Azeris. There was

a lot of intermarriage so it was not really—there were no particular problems as far as I could tell from people's stories and from having read about this.

But then tension began to develop and so you had this outbreak of nationalist feeling in Nagorno-Karabakh over towards the Armenian border but you also had nationalist feeling, not unrelated to Nagorno-Karabakh events, in Baku and in its major suburban city of Sumgait, an industrial—a Soviet industrial city—an awful place really. And so there were actually pogroms in Sumgait and Baku in the late 1980s. Well, you could only call them that. Azeris hounded the Armenians out of their homes and apartments and eventually out of Azerbaijan. There were atrocities and deaths.

By the time I arrived, there were still some Armenians left in Azerbaijan proper; our own calculation, which was just the best guess that we could come up with, was about 18,000 as opposed to almost a million probably, who had been there before. So almost a million Armenians had left Azerbaijan with the few Armenians remaining being mostly women, women married to ethnic Azeri partners. They had a very hard time lying low as you might imagine.

With the Russians it was—I don't know how many mixed marriages there but there had been a large Russian population in Baku. I wouldn't say they were, any more than the Armenians were, the elite particularly but they were just in all aspects of life. They had been living there for centuries and they were all pretty much chased out also. Less dramatically and cruelly than was the case for the Armenians but under pressure, for sure. When the nationalist government came in, for example, it conducted a campaign which you could only say was persecution, economic persecution of the Russian population. For example, the Russian language was still taught in the schools but teachers, in order to get paid, had to teach at least—I don't remember the figures exactly, I'm making this up a little bit—but they had to teach, let's say, at least 30 hours a week and yet it was now proscribed to teach Russian more than, let's say, 20 hours a week. So in that way a Russian teacher could not legitimately make a living and of course the Russian military had, unlike in Georgia—or in Armenia, as far as that goes—the Russian military had pretty much pulled out of Azerbaijan. The Caspian Sea flotilla simply went north and the naval base was turned over to the Azeris. They were simply all gone; I mean, there wasn't even a token force left. The former Soviet airbases were turned over to the Azeris. There was a large Soviet radar station at Gabala, which is still there, an over-the-horizon radar looking to see missiles coming in from the Indian Ocean, basically from U.S. or NATO submarines that might be out there in the Indian Ocean. And that continued to be manned by Russians. It was a point of contention, you know, for several years until finally the Russians signed a ten year lease agreement with the Azeris, but there was a lot of fuss about that. And that's really the only military installation the Russians had in Azerbaijan.

The Armenians in Azerbaijan had had a certain concentration in the musical world and there was a feeling on the part of the Azeris that I spoke to, the educated Azeris that I spoke to, of a certain loss of quality in the cultural life of the country. And in Azerbaijan, immediately after independence, the cultural life of the country in a way was divided into

eastern, ethnic Azeri culture, if you will, looking toward Turkey and toward Persia and Iran, historically, with oriental type of music, oriental plays, oriental operas and so on but also a love for Western classical culture and music. Rostropovich, for example, was born in Baku and grew up there; it was a musical family, and he himself had his early musical training in Baku and all the great Western symphonies and operas were played on the stage in Baku. There was a parallel Eastern and a Western sort of a cultural makeup to the society, both supported by the state. Well, that all came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union and as a result, including these pogroms against the Armenians, the Western side of that equation suffered quite a lot. And even the Eastern side of it suffered because it couldn't continue to get the same kind of state subsidies that they had gotten before. And we knew the cultural people quite well. We became—Sharon and I became patrons of the opera and the symphony there and we'd sometimes go to these productions and we'd also attend performances of the Eastern culture in its various forms. But when we'd go to some of these performances of the opera or the ballet or the symphony orchestra in the Western style there would sometimes not be more than 20 or 25 people in an auditorium or a concert hall which would hold maybe 700 or 800. Sometimes there would be more people on the stage than there were in the audience. Because even the National Theater couldn't afford to heat the concert hall, the air would be freezing in the halls during performances in the winter. The audience and even the orchestra members would wear their coats and hats during the performances—something unheard of, considered very uncultured, during the Soviet period.

We tried to give these people some moral encouragement, and they were desperate for it. I remember once going—they had asked if I wanted to see a rehearsal, a dress rehearsal, of Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*, and I went—this was before Sharon arrived there—and the full dress rehearsal was wonderful. The lead actor sang in German, the others sang in either Russian or Azeri, their costumes were very rich, the orchestra played beautifully and there was just the director and maybe five or six other people watching this and I said, "This is great, when are you going to be putting this on?" And the director said, "No, we're not going to put it on. This is just for you."

Q: Oh my God.

MILES: Yes. It was both gratifying and depressing at the same time, you know.

Q: How did things fall out in the religious field?

MILES: Well, of course, the Armenians left, taking their religion with them in a sense and there had been some mob damage to a couple of the historic Armenian churches there, which was most unfortunate. The Russian Orthodox churches were not bothered and I would often attend Russian Orthodox services for the remaining Russian community. And some Azeris had become Orthodox as well so it was not totally an ethnic Russian thing.

With the Jewish community there was virtually no anti-Semitism. I mean, it's an amazing thing about the Caucasus: I have been in both Georgia and Azerbaijan, three years each.

Well anyhow, almost two years in Azerbaijan, three years plus in Georgia, and I have visited Armenia often and I have talked to our people down in Armenia and there was simply virtually no anti-Semitism in these three places and yet there are significant, historic Jewish communities in these countries. It's an amazing historical and cultural phenomenon and people tell me that it has always been that way; this is nothing new. And this is a region which has had its share of pogroms and atrocities—one ethnic group against another—but none of it seems to apply to the Jewish communities. I say "communities" because they're representatives of, you know, Sephardic Jews, Ashkenazi Jews and even a third community in Azerbaijan, the so-called Mountain Jews who live in the northern part of Azerbaijan near the town of Guba who trace their descent back to the first Diaspora out of Babylon, you know, 2000 years ago. Now, whether that's true or not I don't know, but they consider themselves such. When I was there we had a group of representatives of the American Jewish community come through under the auspices of the Joint organization [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee] led by a former Israeli general. And they choppered up to Guba to visit these Mountain Jews. Later I had lunch with them and they said, you know, it was fun. We felt like we were in the play *Fiddler on the Roof* or something like it, you know, a magical world for Jews that maybe never existed anywhere and certainly doesn't exist anywhere else today, but then they asked, "Why are we here?" There aren't any problems here. "We need to spend our time with the Jewish communities that are having problems," they said. So it was quite revealing.

By the way, the general scared these good souls half to death. They had flown up to this region by way of the Caspian Sea. When they turned inland, the general took the controls and said, now this is how we do it in Israel. And he came in very low and very fast. I think they were all glad when they were finally on the ground.

Q: How about Islam? Was Islam important?

MILES: Well, of course, I should have mentioned that. That is the religion of the vast majority of the population of Azerbaijan; they are Shiites for the most part. Azerbaijan does have a mixed population. There were some Kurds there, there were a few Sunnis; there were a few other ethnic groups as well, Georgians, etc. But for the most part you could say that Azerbaijan has a homogenous Shiite population. The Azeris are ethnically a Turkic people and their language is a Turkic language very close to Turkish or more accurately to 15th, 16th century Turkish. But the culture had looked more toward Iran, and Iran of course is basically a Shiite country and so they are Shiites too. And they had become, in my opinion—and I'm not an expert on this although I spent some time on these issues—but in my opinion they had become quite secularized over the decades of Soviet rule, more so perhaps than any other people in any other former republics or countries, communist countries. And it was interesting because my deputy, Robert Finn, had a doctorate in Turkish studies and knew a lot about Islam and he would often go on television, speaking in Azeri, explaining Islamic customs to the people of Azerbaijan, raising and answering the question, why are you celebrating this holiday? And Azeris used to love it because they didn't know these things or they knew some of it but not all of it and they were not able adequately to explain it to their children. Yet many people

were interested in religion and when they began to go on the Hajj out of Azerbaijan, the Hajji—that's someone who would come back from the Hajj—would gather all the people together from his village or his neighborhood and he would tell them stories about the Hajj and what he had seen and experienced and many of the people, including in the ruling classes and the business classes, were sending their children to the madrassas [Islamic school] for religious instruction. So really there was a growing interest in the religion and kind of a re-Islamization of the society. And of course we knew the religious hierarchy. The spiritual head of all the Muslims in the Caucasus is Sheikh Hajji Pashazade. I knew him well in Baku and, in fact, I stayed in touch with him even in Georgia; he would come over periodically for meetings with Georgian religious leaders and I would attend the ceremonial dinners hosted by the Georgian Patriarch. And I then went over to Baku again, I think it was in 2003, and the same religious leaders were still there.

Q: What was the role of Iran at that time?

MILES: They were sending a few mullahs out to preach in some of the madrassas in Azerbaijan. The Azeri authorities were keeping a close eye on that, as you can imagine. They were a little bit uneasy about Islamic fundamentalism. But it was tolerated. And there were pilgrims who would come up from Iran and also from Iraq, more from Iran because of there was a common border with Iran, and even from Turkey, to visit religious sites in Azerbaijan which they had not been allowed to do in the Soviet period but now they were able to do it. And there were some reciprocal visits as well from Azerbaijani Muslims down to those countries to visit religious sites there.

There was not a lot of business with Iran at that time. The border was fairly strictly controlled. It was open for traffic but you had to have visas and you had to have a reason to go and basically it was businessmen who were going back and forth. I'm sure that many of the ethnic Azeris in Iran had blood relationships with the Azeris in Azerbaijan. It's impossible to believe that they don't. But these ties had become so attenuated over the 70 years of Soviet rule that it would take a lot of cultivation to make them come alive again. So what you had really was a little bit of cross-border traffic, a little bit of cigarette and alcohol smuggling, a little bit of larger scale traffic of rugs or whatever, industrial products or commercial products back and forth from Western Europe and Central Asia but it wasn't large scale, I must say. I went down to the border several times, I'm sure it has increased since then, but at that time, in '92, '93, you could stand there for an hour and there would be no truck at all that would come through.

Q: What was your impression, first of all when you were in Baku, of the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh? I mean, you—who was right, who was wrong? How did we, you know, as Americans—

MILES: Well, you know, it was an awful situation. Much of the fighting had ended by the time I got there, but there was a massacre in Khojaly where large numbers of women and children were killed by Armenian fighters from Nagorno-Karabakh. That occurred shortly before I arrived in Baku; it was one of the things that helped bring down the

previous government. And there was continued fighting around the town of Fizuli. I visited Fizuli after the fighting had just stopped and you could still see remnants of the Grad missiles, these 122 millimeter missiles lying around, see roofs blown in; they are a very inaccurate weapon and both sides were just firing them at random. These aren't guided missiles; they're fired off in large numbers out of these Stalin Organ-type trucks and they land where they land.

And I was sort of shot at myself. I went up near the front, I forget exactly where it was, down around the southern border between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan proper. We went over the ridge line of a hill. I am a former Marine and I felt distinctly uncomfortable up on the ridge line and almost equally uncomfortable on the Nagorno-Karabakh side of it. We were being led there by civilians and I didn't think they knew what they were doing. Anyhow, we went over the ridge line and were on the side of the hill facing Nagorno-Karabakh. I heard, off in the short distance, machine gun fire coming from behind me, meaning these were Azeris firing at the Armenian positions. And shortly came this bang, bang, bang, bang of the Armenian gunners firing back at us, and I thought, this is not a good place to be. And the guide was trying to tell me that all this firing was all Armenian, that the Azeris hadn't fired. I said, "I'm sorry, I don't believe it. I think this has been provoked because I am here and I don't appreciate it much and let's get our butts over on to the other side of the hill," which we did.

I went up to the front several times and in fact on one occasion I went over the front lines by innocent accident. I had read a little story in the paper about a local ceasefire that had been declared between the area commanders in the north on the Armenian side and the Azeri side and I thought this is interesting; I want to go up and take a look at it. So my daughter Elizabeth and I drove all the way up there, it was a long drive, and indeed the story was true. And not only was there a local ceasefire arrangement but there was an OP, an observation post, up there, a military observation point overlooking a key road and on alternate weeks it would be manned by either an Azeri or an Armenian military team, Armenians out of Nagorno-Karabakh, to see that the other side was not moving any heavy equipment across the line. I was there on the day when they were transferring from the Armenian group to the Azeri group. I even had my picture taken with them. I thought it was a quite commendable exercise so that the farmers could plant their crops and take in their crops and whatnot.

Well anyhow, I was at the OP looking through binoculars down at the road and a little village maybe a couple of kilometers away, and I said, well, this is interesting, it's very commendable. And I said, "Now tell me, where is the border exactly?" I'm looking ahead and they said, well, the border is back behind you. And I had driven up in my car with the flag flying and everything. And so I said, you know, I think this is wonderful what you all are doing but I have got to leave now. I got back in the car and hightailed it back into Azeri territory. And you know that, unfortunately—that visit was the kiss of death for the ceasefire effort. The fact of my visit got into the newspapers and I don't remember if it was the Armenian side or the Azeri side, but they decided that they couldn't maintain the ceasefire anymore and so they began fighting against one another again.

Q: Did you find yourself persona non grata with the Armenian lobby and all?

MILES: No. I really tried to avoid chauvinistic comments about the conflict. I would make pious statements about the horror of war and the killing on both sides and the need to try to find a peaceful solution, but I meant them; I wasn't being hypocritical or cynical or anything. And when I was back in America I tried to meet with representatives of the Armenian lobby and they were at first a bit prickly but when they realized I didn't personally have an axe to grind, that I was just trying to represent U.S. government policy here and working along with others in Washington and the international community to try to broker a ceasefire arrangement. At that time that was what we were doing and to do what we could to ease the suffering. And, you know, they never tackled me particularly on that. It was not always an easy thing to do; I had to watch my words constantly and I had to avoid, in a way, being tricked by the Azeris, and I imagine our Ambassador in Armenia, my old friend Harry Gilmore, had the same problem with the Armenians. And I'll give you two examples.

I refused to go and lay flowers at the so-called Martyrs' Lane Cemetery—that's where Azeris who had been killed during Moscow's use of force in Baku in January 1990, but also Azeris killed in the Nagorno-Karabakh fighting, have been buried. I said, "When you have reached a peaceful agreement with the Armenians and we are able to honor both the Armenian dead and the Azeri dead then I'd be happy to do it and I'm sure any ambassador would be happy to do it. But as long as you're still fighting a civil war I am not going to go honor the dead on only one side of that civil war, even though their deaths may have been noble and I have no problem with you doing it. But I am not going to do it." And they accepted that; they didn't like it but they accepted it.

But we had a visiting congressman at one point and the protocol program had him stopping there to lay flowers and I said to the protocol people, "No, he isn't going to do that. Take this off the program." I never even told the congressman about it, I just made that decision on my own. Well, he came and the motorcade had to go by the cemetery. Well, it stopped at the cemetery and all the car doors opened and everybody started to get out and I said to the congressman, "You have got to stay in the car. Don't get out. I'll explain it to you later." And I went up to the people escorting us and said, "This is bullshit. You know perfectly well we are not going to stop here and why we're not going to stop here and the congressman and I are going to keep on going, and if you want to stay here and do whatever you want, that's fine, but you're going to do it without us." And during the rest of the time I was there, they never tried that again. So that was one effort to embroil us in the situation.

And what was the other one? I had two incidents I wanted to mention. Well, I've forgotten the other one; I'll think of it later maybe.

Q: What were you doing, I mean, what was your principal job? Observing, trying to—

MILES: I sometimes felt my principal job was finding a decent Chancery and a residence. I spent about a third of my time on that, successfully; a third of my time on just

getting to know the place; and a third of my time, you know, an extension of the second, I guess, trying to wend my way through these serious struggles that were going on. With the residence and the Chancery—I mentioned Nick Salgo had gone out, spent literally 24 hours in each capital and had initialed leases for both a chancery and a residence. Now, the Army Corps of Engineers had tipped me off before I went out to Baku—that's right, I did return to America for a week or so before I went out, I remember now—and during that time the representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers had come around to see me at the State Department and said, "We know about these buildings that Ambassador Salgo has negotiated leases for and, in Baku, neither one is structurally sound and neither one is very good from a security standpoint," and then they explained why. And I said, "Well, I'll take a look at it when I go out." And then I went out, I found that the proposed residence was a) very tiny and b) was in a historically important district but one in which the ground structure had been weakened by the metro, the subway system having gone underground there. It's all very dry soil in Baku and they probably don't get ten inches of rain a year there and so every time the subway cars went through, the ground would tremble and there would be cracks in the ground and everything. And this house was so rundown, it had no yard around it at all and no parking particularly, and it was so rundown that it had no roof on it. I mean, you would have to start from that and do everything else. So that wasn't very satisfactory. And then the proposed chancery nominally sounded good: it was the former Russian Governor General's house from the old Russian Empire days, located right down on the shore of the Caspian Sea. But that's the rub, because the Caspian Sea is a peculiar lake really, and it rises and falls as much as 10 to 15 feet over the course of a few decades. The Governor General's house was within a stone's throw of the Caspian. When you walked in you actually stepped down from the sidewalk level and there were stone tiles on the floor, you could actually lift up the tiles and there would be the Caspian Sea under there. I thought, yeah, this is great; the water is about six inches from the floor level and what will happen when it rises six inches, let alone six feet.

In addition, the Governor General's house was right on the sidewalk of the major street curving around the shoreline and there was no parking. So not only was it very bad from the structural and the security standpoint but every time anybody stopped to let somebody off and then go park somewhere, they would be blocking traffic. So I thought, this isn't very good either. And, boy, I worked my ass off trying to get a decent residence and a decent chancery. I became a real pest with President Elchibey. I never did really succeed with the residence but we were able to get a wonderful 1907 building with great grounds around it pretty high up on a hill overlooking the downtown part of the city. That beautiful building was big enough to put the Ambassador's "residence" in one wing. We were the envy of the other diplomats and I got a very good 30 year lease on it. I wanted the U. S. Government to buy it but they were not in a buying mood at that time so we had a $60,000 a year lease on property worth millions, a real coup, I think. We spent 14 million dollars to modernize the building, put in an elevator, new wiring and plumbing and so on. I really think it's the nicest chancery in the entire former Soviet Union. And I think the only reason I was able to pull it off was because I had known Nick Salgo from earlier days and he had a certain confidence in me, otherwise I'm sure it would have been difficult getting the State Department bureaucracy to go along with it.

Q: Well, it sounds like—looking ahead, was Azerbaijan—it was not a very, I mean, in space, it wasn't very big. How about population?

MILES: Well, seven-and-a-half million people.

Q: Sitting on that pool of oil, it looked like there was some potential for all of them to do very nicely, thank you.

MILES: Yes. And American oil companies were already there. They began moving down there even in the last days of the Soviet Union. And so when the Soviet Union collapsed they saw even more profits ahead and they were really quite interested in getting their share of the development. Pennzoil had put something like $110 million upfront for a natural gas facility. I'm not quite sure what you have to do with natural gas in order to be able to use it, but certainly you've got to bring it up from beneath the seabed. Most of these oil and gas deposits are located out in the Caspian Sea so you have to bring the oil or gas up from lower depths and then process them in some way and get the product off to wherever it's going. So Pennzoil had put $110 or $115 million into a state-of-the-art natural gas facility that they were very proud of and they didn't know when they would ever see a return on that. In the end I think they all made a fair amount of money out of their investments and from the very early days we were looking at ways in which the Azeris could diversify their export possibilities. Basically that meant getting that oil and gas out to Western markets without going through Russia or without going through Iran. With Russia it was just a desire to give them an alternate means out. They had routes out through Russia going back to the Soviet period but that meant the Russians had a lock on the transit of the oil; the Russians consider oil and gas strategic resources and they consider pipelines strategic as well and so, I'm not saying that it's a zero sum gain or whatever, but clearly any oil or gas producers should have a multiple outlet for their product; it just makes sense. Otherwise you're going to be at the mercy of the person who is controlling the transit lines. And with Iran, dropping pipelines down right straight through Iran, either in a swap arrangement with the Iranians where you would deliver your oil to northern Iran and they would ship their oil out on your behalf from southern Iran or just a pipeline that would run it right on out would make eminent sense. I mean, it's the shortest route and it's an easy route and it would be just great. But because of our strained relations with Iran after the fall of the Shah, sanctions were imposed and it's against U.S. law for American companies to be involved in such a venture. That applies to American involvement in the major international financial institutions as well. There is no way that those pipelines involving several billions of dollars of investment could be financed without the involvement of the United States. So that meant the only reasonable alternative was to run a very long pipeline, 1700 kilometers long, out from Baku all the way to Turkey. This was to be a large pipeline—around 40 inches in diameter. The question originally was would it go through Armenia or would it go through Georgia? And for a variety of reasons it was decided by the companies that were involved and by the Georgian government that it would be better to route it through Georgia rather than route it through Armenia, primarily for security reasons due to the fighting that was going on, and other factors. And at the same time they would run a gas pipeline from Baku all

the way to Erzurum in northeastern Turkey. And that gas would be intended pretty much for the Turkish market. And after years of struggle in which the U.S. role and to a degree the British role was paramount, those pipelines have been finished and they are in operation today. Amazing achievement really.

Q: Did you find yourself trying to help the Azeris deal with—I would imagine you'd have every type of not only legitimate oil men but conmen and everybody else coming in there and trying to—

MILES: We did have some conmen. There was one particularly nasty guy who was not American. He was—I don't think he was ethnic Azeri; he was from one of the other Stans as I recall. He had been living in Czechoslovakia and somehow he had some shady relationship with people that were in the oil business in Azerbaijan. And so he came down and insinuated himself into the situation and eventually told the Baku representatives of the American oil companies that they would have to pay him a rather handsome fee, several million dollars, $3 million, as I recall, in order to proceed with their negotiations with the state oil company of Azerbaijan. And we had been pretty successful in getting the oil company representatives, the American oil company representatives, to meet with us. They were a very suspicious bunch and they didn't care much for the U.S. government, didn't care much for American embassies, and they saw no real good to be gained by divulging their secrets to us or to their industry rivals. But we tried hard and we persevered and we, I think, developed a certain rapport with these American representatives and so they came to me about this situation and I said, the only way in this situation—this is after Heydar Aliyev had come to power; we are kind of jumping ahead of the story a little bit but that's all right—and I said, the only way you are going to deal with a situation like this is for me to go and talk to the President, Heydar Aliyev, and see if we can't sort it out. And so I did. Heydar Aliyev, who was quite capable of being disingenuous, said he was shocked, shocked to hear that such a thing was going on and he would stop it immediately. And he is a man of his word or was—he's dead now—and so by golly he did stop it.

I remember now the incident I was going to mention. It's a good story. We could have gotten unpleasantly embroiled in the Nagorno-Karabakh business. The Azeri authorities had contracted with an American businessman to bring in a bunch of former Special Forces types or whatever to teach the Azeris what was described as defensive military techniques—not to provide weapons but simply to provide training and what they described as defensive tactical maneuver training. And I wasn't informed of any of this; I found out about it through people just talking to me. I was able to determine that the information was accurate, that these Americans were in the country and that they were providing this training. I informed the State Department and the other agencies of government.

Well, I then went to see the Prime Minister and said, "I understand that this is going on. This may not be illegal." I had learned that if military training is purely defensive training, then there is no American law against it as long as weapons are not being provided, and I said, "It may not be illegal from an American standpoint but I don't like

it. It gets us involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh situation and we don't want to get involved in it and so I am asking you to remove these people from your country." And he also was disingenuous, said he didn't know about it, he would look into it and he would let me know. So I went back a week or so later and he said, "Oh yes, those American trainers that we have in the country, they are not actually doing anything military at all; they are working at the plow factory and they are helping us develop our farm machinery." And I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, really. Tell me another one." And I said, "I am not going to sit here and talk to you on the basis of this kind of a discussion." And I had brought the military attaché along in full uniform with his ribbons and medals and all that and I wanted to do that deliberately as part of the political theater. And I brought the deputy, Robert Finn, along and I said, "This conversation is over as far as I am concerned and I'll take it up with the President." And I stood up and walked out. And I did take it up with the President and the mercenaries were removed shortly after that. By the way, the title of the cable we sent out on this episode was "Beating Plowshares into Swords".

Q: Oh boy.

MILES: Yes. It was exciting times actually. And the State Department was so busy with all the developments in the independent Russia and efforts to get the nuclear weapons under control and opening up all these new posts and so forth that they really couldn't spend a lot of time with any one ambassador. And also our communications were pretty primitive in those days. You know, we had a secure phone which didn't work very well and we had a rather primitive encrypted cable facility and that was about it. Our American staff had to take turns sleeping in the room in the hotel where we had this quite simple equipment. I mean, the equipment consisted of opening a window, literally, and putting a little tiny dish out the window and hopefully you got a signal from the satellite to be able to send stuff back to Washington and other interested posts. Primitive though it was, it was still classified stuff and so we had to take turns sleeping on the floor of this little room at the hotel to protect it. And I did it too; I took my turn as well. It was kind of fun; I enjoyed it.

Q: Was there any relationship with our Embassy in Moscow or had they pretty well written you off?

MILES: The latter. We informed them and our embassies in Yerevan and Tbilisi what we were up to and I think we informed Ankara and that is about it. Other than that our addressees were all either with the military authorities in Europe or with Washington, the various agencies in Washington. Because everyone was so busy in those days and so preoccupied with their own little piece of the geographic turf, we didn't try to disseminate our messages as widely as we would have otherwise.

Q: Were you hit by all the NGOs or were they headed elsewhere?

MILES: No, at the beginning, they weren't very active in Azerbaijan. Wait a minute, CARE was there because they hired my daughter for a while. Maybe there were some others at that time but I really can't recall any.

Q: They were all over the place.

MILES: Yes, but they came a little more slowly to Azerbaijan. These were pretty wild and wooly days and you had a few Protestant missionary types out there, including at least a couple that were there under somewhat false pretenses who claimed not to be religious and who were setting up schools or whatever but who actually had a hidden Protestant Evangelical agenda. But these were very few in number. I mean, by the time I left Azerbaijan in late 1993 I could count the number of Western NGO representatives in the country, literally on the fingers of one hand. It was not anything like the flood of people that you have out there now. That began a few years later.

Q: Well, they were, you know—when I was in Kyrgyzstan and also in Kazakhstan, I mean, there were quite a few. But those are big places.

MILES: They are bigger, yes. Well, keep in mind, Azerbaijan was in the throes of a civil war and in a sense a war with Armenia as well and so it wasn't a very safe place. In addition to the peaceful coup d'etat that took place shortly after I arrived, there was a second attempted coup which occurred within the year—in '93—which, in the end, brought Heydar Aliyev to power. Now, that was also relatively bloodless but it did involve arms and it did involve danger and so I think sensible people tended to stay away except for the oil and gas people.

Q: What about the Russian Embassy? Were the Russians pretty well happy to sort of write these areas off or—? Of course, Azerbaijan had all the oil.

MILES: They were interested. I was good friends with Walter Shoniya, the Russian Ambassador, who was a very decent fellow but he wasn't getting clear instructions from Moscow and he wasn't getting much money from Moscow to run his embassy either. For quite a while the Russians were working out of their hotel rooms just like we were. In fact, when I finally got a temporary residence for my wife and myself—we were there 18 months in Azerbaijan, and we stayed in the awful hotel room for 16 of those 18 months—Walter grabbed our room. It was considered a "luxe" room because it had a folding plastic screen that you could pull from wall to wall and hide the bed.

Q: Oh boy.

MILES: Yes. It was considered a luxe apartment because it had a sitting room attached to the bedroom. It was just one big room but it was bigger than the other rooms. And we cooked in that room and believe it or not, entertained in that room. We washed the dishes in the sink or the bathtub and let them dry in the bidet. Our daughter Elizabeth was working with CARE before they stopped their work in Azerbaijan and part of the time she was there she slept on the floor of the sitting room, as did our son Richard when he came for Christmas. And when I left, the Russian Ambassador grabbed the room because it was considered very desirable. So we had a good relationship. In fact at one point Sharon said she wished she had taken a picture of this; it was a perfect example of

peaceful coexistence. We would give our laundry to the chambermaids in the hotel to wash, they would wash them by hand and they would hang them on the line behind the hotel and I knew from saunas and things that Walter wore these black sort of swimming trunk type shorts, underpants, and I wore boxer shorts that were white, and so one day she looked out and there was the Russian ambassador's black underpants hanging on the line right next to my white boxer shorts.

Q: What do you want? We can go for another half hour or would you like to stop here?

MILES: Why don't we stop here because I haven't spoken yet about our relationship with Heydar Aliyev and the way in which he came to power; I think it's fairly important.

Q: Okay, we'll do that. Does this include the sort of complexities of the civil war there?

MILES: To a degree.

Q: Okay. Alright then, we'll do that the next time.

MILES: Okay. That's fine.

Q: Okay. Today is the 14th of May, 2007. Dick, do you want to pick up from where we were?

MILES: Okay. Well, The nationalist government didn't really like us developing our relationship with Heydar Aliyev, who was in domestic exile over in Nakhchivan, the exclave of Azerbaijan nestled up against the Iranian border and a tiny border with Turkey, actually, about seven kilometers. But we did it anyhow because I thought it was important to do so and in the end this proved very beneficial for United States policy because even though Aliyev was hardly a democrat he was a very intelligent and wise politician, a real political figure, and he did bring some stability to the country and did rule up until his death and his son, this is 2007 now, his son is ruling today. And so by getting to know him and developing, I would say, something of a friendship with him we were able to move easily from having been supporters of Elchibey's nationalist government to being supporters of the Aliyev government, which replaced the nationalist government. The change of governments was not exactly a violent turnover but neither was it totally peaceful either. So it probably is, if not unique, it's certainly rare, I think, in contemporary history that a great power like the United States would be able to maintain such a smooth relationship between two rather different governments, one of which came to power not entirely by peaceful means.

I don't recall exactly the degree to which I explained some of this earlier but I had sent my deputy Robert Finn over to see Heydar Aliyev in Nakhchivan. He reported back that Aliyev was obviously an intelligent person and was just vegetating over there in Nakhchivan trying to help the people that lived in Nakhchivan to keep body and soul alive. We always think of the economic sanctions between Azerbaijan and Armenia but we sometimes tend to forget that they cut both ways and the sanctions hurt Nakhchivan

as much as they hurt Armenia, maybe even more because Nakhchivan is a smaller place with a tiny population and a rather poor place; there are no natural resources there particularly, it's an agricultural community. And so when I did go over, I believe by then it was approaching the winter of 1992, I found the conditions very grave indeed.

People, as they had in Armenia, people had lopped the limbs off trees so that all over Nakhchivan, which isn't a terrifically wooded place and therefore trees are rather valuable, you saw the stumps of trees up in the air with the major branches being cut off and I don't know how many of those trees actually survived that kind of treatment. The Iranians were providing a little bit of kerosene and a little bit—a few kerosene heaters and that's how Heydar Aliyev was heating his office. But most people in Nakhchivan were simply suffering and staying warm through the use of charcoal heaters or blankets or whatever they could do.

I remember visiting one eye hospital, ophthalmological hospital, and I was struck by the fact that the apparatus that's used to boil instruments for surgical operations, the water had frozen solid in it and so it would be something of a task to make sure those instruments were boiled and sterile. And I remember going to a heart clinic where I was taken into a room where a fellow had just had a heart attack and there were blankets that had been nailed up over the windows and over the door. So in this room, then, where the fellow had suffered a heart attack and was lying in bed pretty much comatose, there were three or four or five family members gathered around, there were blankets tacked up over the windows and over the door so you had to push aside two layers of heavy blankets to get into the room. And the only heat in the room came from what amounts to a primitive electric grill, like a hotplate in a way, but what it was—it's worth describing—it was made of sheet metal, tin sort of, bent into kind of a hollow square, and in the middle of it was a very poorly made piece of ceramic with grooves, and in the ceramic grooves was a coil of wire so that when plugged into a mains, when there was electricity, the wire would glow red and that was the heat. It was dangerous itself and of course there was not usually electricity. I was told, and I witnessed, actually, that the electrical grid had so little electricity that in order to share it around Nakhchivan it would be shunted to one quarter of the town of Nakhchivan for two hours and then would be shunted to another part of it for another two hours and for certain periods of the day there would be no electricity in the town whatsoever and people would simply go without or they would use candles or an oil lamp or whatever; in the cold winter, these were just desperate conditions.

But I found also that Aliyev was intelligent and alert, grateful for all the attention from us, grateful for news from Baku. He had his own agents, of course that would report to him once in a while but with people like Heydar Aliyev, authoritarian leaders, there is a great tendency, I think, for his supporters or people who wanted to cozy up to him to tell him what he wants to hear. And I think that was true for Heydar Aliyev. Well, he didn't get that from us, he got pretty much the straight story from us and I think he was very grateful for that.

And then, I think I may also have told this story but I want to be sure it's on the record because it was important. When Aliyev's brother died over in Baku he didn't feel able to

attend the funeral because he was afraid he would be arrested if he went back, even though he had a legitimate political position in Nakhchivan. And the fear on the part of the nationalist government, the Elchibey government, of him was so great that I think Aliev's fears were justified, and if I had been in his position I think I wouldn't have attended my brother's funeral either. But I did attend it and I not only attended it but I went with the flag flying on the car and that got back to him, of course. I didn't tell him I was going to do it, I just did it, and again while the nationalist government didn't like it, that gesture made a lot of points with Aliyev.

And then the third thing worth mentioning is that I took my daughter over there. Elizabeth spoke then and speaks now impeccable Russian—she learned to speak it in Russia and also has a doctorate in Russian from Oxford. Heydar Aliyev spoke beautiful Russian, and so—he was a great family man; he was never known for womanizing or anything of that sort. His wife had died and after that he lived a bachelor life with no talk of a scandal; what he may have done for his sex life I haven't the foggiest idea. But it was not widely considered that he was spending time with that sort of thing. At least there was no gossip about it. He was quite devoted to his family and would speak about it often with me, mentioning that he missed his wife, that he thought family was important. So when Elizabeth went with me all the way over to Nakhchivan to meet him, that made a really big impression on him. They got along famously—her Russian was better than mine—and he would always ask about her later. Years later he would ask about her, and I think that her going over there to meet him made a good impression on him. I always enjoyed those visits; they were difficult because the conditions over there were so difficult and you just felt that it was a pity there wasn't something we could do.

We had these Section 907 restrictions that the U.S. Congress had imposed at the request of the Armenian lobby in the United States which basically forbade us from giving any kind of assistance to the government of Azerbaijan as long as the so-called economic blockade continued. And it was one-sided; it was just directed against Azerbaijan, it didn't have any punitive provisions against Armenia or against Nagorno-Karabakh. We were able, working with Dick Armitage, who was later Deputy Secretary of State but at that time he was the U.S. assistance czar for the former Soviet Union. He was a very dynamic, "can do" sort of a fellow. And so working with him we were able to get one shipment of pharmaceuticals and food into Nakhchivan and that also made a splash on television. The nationalist government in Baku couldn't oppose that because after all it was humanitarian assistance for people who really needed it and it was carried—the arrival of the plane, the unloading of the cargo, was carried on television and so that helped a little bit if only in the public relations sense. But in order to get around the feeling in Congress at that time—it was just very shortly after the passage of Section 907 restrictions—we had to land the plane first in Armenia and unload some supplies for the Armenians and then we flew on in, flew the plane on into Nakhchivan.

And there is a funny little story that goes with that. The majority population in Azerbaijan and of course in Nakhchivan is Muslim, Shiite Muslim, and sometimes they do eat pork but generally they tend to avoid it. And so when we got the lift vans on the trucks and backed up to the receiving area there in Nakhchivan we had the television there and the

idea was I would go and dramatically open the rear doors of the lift vans and the cameras would then pan on into all these wonderful American goodies there. And I did have the wit to go out and just see what exactly was in those lift vans before they turned the cameras on and I'm glad I did because what was facing the camera and the door as you opened it was one pork meal after another. It was incredible. There was a wall of food there which looked like an advertisement for pork. I suppose no one packed it that way deliberately but the effect was really kind of ridiculous. Now in the practical sense it didn't matter because the people in Nakhchivan and in Azerbaijan had become rather secular over the course of the communist period and, so, many of them did eat pork in fact, so I don't think it would have caused a big fuss, but it's not the kind of thing you want to put on television in a Muslim country. And so I quickly told one of the American officers to tell the TV people that there would be just a short delay and then we rearranged this food so that we have more politically palatable food up front. Kind of funny, really.

Anyhow, later that year, well, actually, in '93, the political crisis in the country continued to worsen due to the ineptitude and inability of the Elchibey Government to organize themselves. And admittedly the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh was distracting them and there didn't seem to be a whole lot that the international community could do to try to bring about a solution to that problem, and in fact here and now, 15 years later, they still haven't brought about a solution to the problem although various ceasefires have been arranged. I believe I counted something like 15 ceasefires during the 18 months I was there and they would hold for a little while or they would hold on one portion of the lines and then they would be destroyed by one side or the other or both. It was just too difficult. But the OSCE did set up the so-called Minsk Group, in which Americans did take part and other people of good will tried and the United Nations developed a program, tried in its way to alleviate the conditions for the refugees and also for some of the people in Nagorno-Karabakh as well. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees was functioning in Armenia and in Azerbaijan and so that also helped a little bit. But the plight of the refugees—there were 800,000 of them living in very difficult conditions: dugouts in the ground, abandoned railway cars on the siding, abandoned Pioneer day camps in the summer, often, well, actually, usually, with no electricity and no heat. Our daughter Elizabeth, who was helping deliver relief supplies to refugee communities around Azerbaijan, would tell us of the absolutely horrendous conditions many of the refugees were living in.

All this was putting a lot of pressure on the Elchibey government, and then a disgruntled army officer, I believe his rank was colonel—these ranks didn't mean a whole lot: nobody had much military experience there except from taking potshots at the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh—but a disgruntled army officer named Surat Huseynov declared that he was going to march on Baku and clean things up there. It was never clear to me if anyone actually put him up to that or if this was just his idea. He was a little bit of a megalomaniac and he may have had the idea that he would put himself in power; I really don't know. I have shaken his hand but I never had a substantive discussion with him. He didn't have slogans like, "I am going to restore Heydar Aliyev to power"; his aim basically was he was just going to go to Baku and toss the rascals out and then see what

happens at that point. And this threw the nationalist government into a tizzy. In this as in many other things, they just could not agree on what to do and then set someone to do it. At one point they did have some desultory negotiations with him which didn't amount to anything. Now this "March on Baku" was one of the strangest things I have ever seen. The small group of military people that had surrounded this fellow came closer and closer to Baku and eventually they got close enough to the town so that the soldiers, in what amounts to a rebellion within a rebellion, would get into their army trucks, their lorries, rifles, pistols and all and drive off into downtown Baku where they would get out, not being met by anybody, would then hop out and have tea or a Coca Cola at a sidewalk café and would, you know, watch the girls go by and then would hop back in their trucks and drive back out to their bivouac. And nobody stopped them one way or the other; nor did they try to do anything themselves. I witnessed this with my own eyes. Very strange.

I remember once, in fact, Sharon and I were walking along one of the sidewalks in the early evening and one of these trucks came careening up, stopped right in front of us, and about 20 soldiers with AK-47s jumped out, and I thought, Jesus, we've had it now. We're going to be shot or held hostage or who knows what. And they just went right straight past us into the café there and sat down and had their tea or whatever. So it was a very strange display of force, I must say.

Well anyhow, the nationalist government did panic over this and I guess that was almost their only recourse, given their own ineptitude. So they called Heydar Aliyev in from Nakhchivan to take over the government and help to restore order, with the idea that he would stop Colonel Huseynov from bringing the troops on into town or at least handle him appropriately. And I guess he did handle him appropriately; the nationalist leader Elchibey himself went off into domestic exile in Nakhchivan and—by sheer coincidence he also was from this tiny place in Nakhchivan—where he eventually died. There was some pressure on him but he was allowed to have his own guards around his house and as far as I know there were no government organized assassination attempts against him. There was a little bit of attempted violence against him but I think most likely, because it was so unsuccessful and never repeated, that it probably was simply done by adventurers who thought they would curry favor with the new government. But, I don't know the facts of that case. Anyhow, Elchibey was able to live out the rest of his life in somewhat comfortable exile over there in Nakhchivan while Aliyev, to jump ahead a little bit, at first treated Colonel Huseynov with a degree of respect—appointing him Prime Minister, for example. I left Azerbaijan about that time so the rest of the story is not anything I witnessed personally. But, Huseynov, who was basically a thuggish type, with no experience in governing anything, military or civilian, apparently was involved in a coup attempt against Aliyev. He fled to Russia but was then returned by the Russians because they were trying to build a decent relationship with Heydar Aliyev and vice versa. Huseynov was put in prison and was only recently released. So his coup-making attempts were not very successful in the personal sense.

Well, to back up a bit, Aliyev asked me, shortly after his return to Baku, what I thought he needed to do, now that he was in power, to obtain the support and the recognition of the American government and I said, well, there was no question—and this is after

checking with Washington, of course and keeping them informed during all this time, that is what all ambassadors do—I said there was really no question of our recognition, that we understood the way things had happened, both with regard to the failures of the nationalist government and to his own coming to power and so our policy toward Azerbaijan itself would not change. But I suggested to him, and this was not an original idea, it actually came from one of the deputy assistant secretaries in the European Bureau of the State Department, Larry Napper, later our ambassador to Latvia and also to Kazakhstan, that Aliyev hold a referendum. And we all know that referendums are the lowest form of democratic life but nonetheless they can serve a public relations purpose and so I suggested that to Aliyev, and he thought it was a great idea, and that is what he did. And I said, "Keep it simple. We don't want to be looking backward at the mistakes of the previous government or anything like that. You just need to legitimize yourself by having people say whether they want you in power or not." Aliyev was far from being a democrat but he was a very popular person. He had his popularity even before the coup, and after the coup, his popularity went even higher. In that part of the world, public opinion tends to follow the fellow who actually has the power. Well, this is not unknown in other countries. And so there was a referendum, he did win that with 99 percent of the support in that referendum and was in a way legitimized by it. Later, he did win democratic elections, although I don't over-rate the degree of democracy in a place like Azerbaijan even to this day. And I notice the election which just took place in Armenia was declared by the international observers in the newspapers today, you know, May 14, 2007, as being a relatively open and honest election and the first such election in Armenia since their independence. So, you know, democracy comes a little bit slow out in these former communist states.

But at any rate, Aliyev was certainly capable of running the country and he did run it and did try, especially later after I had left, to work with the United States and the other countries and the international organizations to bring about a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and they wound up, and, again, this is after my time, but he wound up in meetings with the Americans, with Colin Powell and with the representatives from Armenia, in Key West, Florida, to try to reach a solution. In the end neither he nor the Armenian leaders felt they could bite their respective bullets and so that attempt failed and I think he was perhaps the only person who at that time and in the foreseeable future could have brought about a political solution from the standpoint of the Azeri people, and so the effort failed and it's unfortunate that it did so. But in other ways, in cooperation with the Americans and other countries that were involved in the exploitation of the Caspian energy resources, in trying to work out a better relationship with the Russians, in trying to develop the economy of Azerbaijan, he did a pretty credible job, actually. So I think it was well done that we were able to help him in his transition into power and his holding onto the reins of power.

Q: While this was going on what were the Armenians doing?

MILES: Well, in Nagorno-Karabakh they were consolidating their military victories. Shortly before I arrived there was in fact a famous massacre, the Khojaly Massacre, which you can read about in history books, in which not just fighters were killed by the

Armenian forces in the town of Khojaly but also women and children when they were trying to flee. It was a pretty awful little piece of history and that again is the sort of thing that put a lot of pressure on the nationalist government to rectify these losses and to somehow justify these dead and they were frankly never able to do it. So you continued to have—

Q: Given the Armenian lobby pressure in the United States, did the Armenians in Armenia ever—were they, as far as we were concerned, held accountable for this massacre?

MILES: The answer actually is no. The people who should have been held accountable for it were the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians who were involved in this incident. And no, they were not. I'm not saying that atrocities weren't committed by the Azeri side—I've already mentioned the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and in Baku—but we are talking about Khojaly now. And I think that Khojaly was a pretty awful event.

So the Armenian-American community continued to support the Armenians in Armenia and also the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. This had a kind of a romantic appeal, you know, and people often will just—Armenians and Armenian-Americans will often simply use the word "Turk" to describe the Azeris. They are a Turkish people, of course, but they have their own history; they are not, they have never been part of the Ottoman Empire and so forth. I do some consulting with the U.S. Army. I have been a mentor at a negotiating exercise at the Army War College for the last two years. The instructors use the Nagorno-Karabakh situation as basis for their exercise because it involves all these ethnic issues, border issues, historical issues and the great powers in the international community are all involved and so it makes a great exercise for people to sink their teeth into and worry over a little bit. By the way, the student negotiators have never been able to reach a peaceful solution to the problem.

Q: Well then, you left there when? In 1990-what?

MILES: December of 1993. I planned to stay for the whole three years of a normal diplomatic tour, which would have put me out of there in 1995 but I was called in the fall of '93 by Deputy Secretary Talbott, who I have known forever. He was a young *Time* magazine correspondent in Belgrade when I was on my second assignment in the Foreign Service, so we have been friends for a very long time, and he said, "We're sending Tom Pickering, one of our super star ambassadors, to Moscow but Pickering has never even visited Russia before, let alone served there, and we need someone who has Russian and some experience with the Soviet system to go and be his deputy, because we're calling the present deputy, Jim Collins, back to Washington. We're setting up a new shop in the Department to deal with the former Soviet Union and it will be under the Secretary's office and I want Jim to run that, so we're a little desperate. We want you to go to Moscow."

Well, of course I didn't want to go to Moscow. It's a lot of fun being ambassador, even in a benighted place like Azerbaijan. In fact, I was having a hell of a time in Azerbaijan; I

thoroughly enjoyed it and had a really good team, and I told Strobe I didn't really want to go and I then reeled off the names of four or five people that I thought would be Jim Dandy as deputy up there. Now Strobe is a very straight shooter; he isn't a manipulator. He's a very honest person, and by golly, he said okay, let me contact these people. And he did. He contacted every one of them, and either they were going to retire or they were ill or their wife was ill or they didn't want to go back to Moscow because of the kids, or, you know, there was always some reason why they couldn't do it. And so he leaned on me again and I gave him some more names; I really didn't want to go. And he tried those names, which was a shorter list, about three people I think, and none of them wanted to do it either. So he came back to me and I said, "Okay, let me go up and talk to Pickering and then I'll give you a definitive answer after that." I could have been ordered up there but I could also have resigned and actually I think he would have let me stay in Azerbaijan if that's what I really wanted to do, so the choice was mine.

I went up to see Pickering and we got along alright. We have absolute totally different personalities. Being around him is like being around a 2000 watt light bulb and being around me is probably like being around a 75 watt light bulb. I mean, there is just a big difference in our energy levels and our intellect and our creative imagination and our contacts in Washington and so on. I mean, he is in a different league. He is in the Dick Holbrooke, Stu Eizenstat, Frank Wisner league and I am not. I mean, that's just the way it is.

Well anyhow, we got along alright and I said, "Okay, I'll do it, but I want to send you—that is Pickering—a written message in which I lay out some things that I want to be perfectly clear with you about and I'd rather do it in writing so we know what we're talking about." So I went back and I wrote what became known around the Embassy in Moscow, although it was a private communication between him and me, and it's worth recounting, I think. I sent him a written message saying, I will agree to come but I want you to understand that you and I have quite different personalities. And I have a couple of conditions. I want to be able to bring my secretary. At that point my secretary, Linda Price, had been with me for several years and DCMs don't get to bring their secretaries, as you know, only ambassadors do—but I want to bring my secretary. Second, I want to be able to live off compound. I hate the idea of these embassy compounds and the deputy's house was on the embassy compound. The security people kept a careful eye on the Russian guests, well, on all non-Embassy guests, actually. They almost inspected the contents of their pockets and everything before they could enter the compound. A guard had to escort each visitor from the compound gate to my townhouse and back out again. It was really awful, and I said I want to be able to live off the compound—we will have to find a decent apartment somewhere out in town. And third, I am not a workaholic. I don't intend to work Saturdays and Sundays unless there is a real crisis or a VIP visitor, and every once in a while I am going to disappear early because my wife and I like to do the opera and the ballet and these things start at 7:00 sharp in Moscow and you can't get in after the curtain goes up; they are really strict about that. So I'll be leaving at 6:15 every once in a while. And he wrote back saying that all this was acceptable and he understood perfectly. I mean, most people would not be as mature as Pickering and as

wise as Pickering and would have said to Deputy Secretary Talbott, "Tell this arrogant little shit to go take a walk. I'll find my own deputy."

Well, I did all those things that I said I was going to do with the exception of finding a place off campus, and the reason for that was this. Sharon and I spent a lot of time looking. The General Services Office was totally hopeless in finding us an adequate place. They didn't have a clue what a deputy's place should look like so we did it ourselves. And we found a number of places that could have worked. There were some that were actually too luxurious and, you know, you would have been laughed out of the Foreign Service by taking it. But what would have been practical would have been to knock two or three nice apartments together, tear down some walls and so on. This can all be done rather rapidly actually, it's no big deal, but it would cost a tidy bit of money. And then you'd have that place for eternity; I mean, you could have that a hundred years or so, whatever. So it wasn't an impractical idea at all but the catch is that the rents in Moscow had begun to skyrocket. And just as we were about to decide on a place, the USAID Mission Chief in Moscow, a very decent fellow, had come under fire for having spent several tens of thousands of dollars on remodeling a place for himself and for paying a fairly large rent on it. Well, he had done exactly what I was getting ready to do and anyone who knows Moscow at that time would have felt that it was all perfectly justified. But to read about it in *The Washington Post*, and especially if you are a congressman reading about it in *The Washington Post*, the only word that would come to mind would be outrage and abuse of authority, waste of Government money, and so on, blah, blah, blah. And so the timing was just unfortunate and so we never did move off the compound. We did a hell of a lot of entertaining in Moscow but we did it in the tiny deputy's house. I don't know if you've been in there or not.

Q: No, I haven't.

MILES: I mean, it's very small. And we did it but we could never have more than about 50 people for a cocktail party and you could never have more than 10 or so for a sit-down dinner. And sometimes in the summer we could expand out a little bit because it did have a tiny bit of ground to the side of it which at least enabled you to have an outdoor barbecue or whatever. Or if we were really desperate we could do a split-level cocktail party or a buffet dinner where you would have people on two different levels of the house. It had a finished basement and so you could use the first floor for a musical evening or drinks and use the floor below for dinner. Well, you can see this required a lot of juggling things about on the part of Sharon and the household staff, not to mention on the part of the guests. And so it just was a constant bother the whole time we were there. We just kept seeing opportunities that were wasted because we didn't have space enough to do it. Now Pickering and his wife had Spaso House, which is perfectly big enough for anything that an ambassador would want to do, and they did a lot of entertaining and they were good enough to pick up some of our suggestions for things that they might do. But it was always a disappointment to me that I wasn't able to do what I wanted to do and move into a decent sized place in Moscow and really cut a swath in that town the way Sharon and I had done in Leningrad.

I'd like to mention just one of the representational opportunities that we did seize to everyone's advantage. It shows what one can do in a place like Moscow. I had read Marie "Missie" Vassiltchikov's book, "Berlin Diaries: 1940-1945" and had enjoyed the book very much. Then I read in a Moscow newspaper that Missie's brother, Prince George Vassiltchikov, was in Moscow to promote the book's newly published Russian translation. Missie had lived and died in England so I phoned the British Embassy to ask whether or not they were doing anything in connection with this. "No," they said. Ditto from the publisher. So I told the publisher that I would like to have a small reception for George Vassiltchikov and I asked the publisher to come up with a guest list. Well, the result was a very nice event, virtually none of the guests had ever been at an American or any other foreign embassy event, and all this was received very nicely in Moscow cultural circles. And, as a bonus, George Vassiltchikov and I became good friends. I believe that he is the most witty and entertaining correspondent I have ever had. He and Ambassador Pickering even carried on a long correspondence. My daughter and I even visited him in London. A wonderful man.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MILES: Well, it was almost three years. Went in December of '93, right after the events at the Russian White House, you remember, with the tanks firing on the beleaguered parliamentary deputies in there and Yeltsin's rise to power and so on. So we arrived in December of '93 and there was still some evidence of the crisis which had occurred so recently. We could look out of our townhouse windows and see the smoke blackened floors of the parliament where fires had been started by the shelling and all. So, it was palpable; I mean, you could almost smell the gun smoke and smoke of burning papers in the air. And then we stayed until summer of 1996. So it was almost a full three years.

Q: How would you describe the staff of the Embassy and how it operated?

MILES: Well, it was huge, of course. If you include the Consulates General in Vladivostok, Yekaterinburg and St. Petersburg, and you included the Foreign Service Nationals and the third country nationals and the American officers, you're talking about a thousand people. And so, for the State Department, that puts it into the realm of one of our larger embassies. Mexico City, Tokyo, Paris, London maybe; Cairo certainly. Before Iraq, Moscow would have been one of our five largest embassies. So managing it took some time and effort and that is largely what DCMs do, as you know—you are sort of a mayor or a city manager of a small town which is represented by all these people. And so you get into everything from labor disputes to, quite literally, dog poop on the sidewalks. It was just an incredible range of things. And, of course, there are foreign policy aspects to the job also.

Pickering liked to travel and so he was away a lot, in Russia, all over Russia, and he would travel abroad on occasion and he was back in America on occasion. I counted it up once and I was actually Chargé for about six months total and so that was a lot of fun. I have only two regrets about my foreign service career. One is that I didn't curtail a couple of people back to Washington —but only a couple. You know, you can always see that in

hindsight. And the other regret, frankly, was that I was never able to be Ambassador to Russia. I would have loved to have been Ambassador to Russia. But being Chargé is certainly the next best thing and for a diplomat, especially for an American diplomat, there literally is no greater thrill than driving up to the Kremlin in the official car with the flag flying from the fender, and I was able to do that on occasion as Chargé and it was always very emotional for me. It's like when you are overseas and you hear the *Star Spangled Banner* play; it sends a special thrill down your spine, just something about the time and the place which is unique and very exciting. So, to be able to do that, to not only help Pickering run what I thought was a very good Mission at that time, but also to be Chargé for extended periods of time was a great thrill and one of the high points of my career.

Q: How did you deal with the Foreign Service Nationals? Because we've gone through the time when we have replaced almost all of them with Americans and all. What was the situation when you were there?

MILES: Well, when you say we replaced the Foreign Service Nationals, it was not voluntary. We had to replace them. As you remember in, I think it was October of '87, six months or so before I first went to Leningrad as consul general, we had thrown out a number of what we believed to be KGB and GRU spies from the United States and in retaliation, the Soviets—it was the Soviet government at that time—took away all our FSNs. These were the personnel who were supplied through UPDK [*Upravleniye po Obsluzhivaniyu Diplomaticheskogo Korpusa*], the official agency of the Foreign Ministry for dealing with diplomatic establishments, which provided all the local Embassy employees and also the maids and the private drivers and the nannies that many people hired. And so literally overnight, all of those FSNs were withdrawn. In some cases, of course, good riddance, but in most cases, not. On balance, these were very intelligent and capable employees.

All the FSNs had to report to their handlers in those days and we all understood that; our FSNs understood it and many of them just did it in a perfunctory way. Others were career officers of the KGB or the GRU, and they would try to learn what they could from your actions and behavior. Sometimes they would try to get to know you to discover your weaknesses or somebody else's weaknesses; in other words, they were regular espionage agents. Others just wanted to do their job and get their salary and develop their family life and so it was really, it was very sad for many of these people that they were forced to leave our service. I think it's almost always the case that our Foreign Service Nationals in the Soviet Union developed divided loyalties. In my experience, many of those that had worked for us for a while came to like the United States and its people and its ways as best as they understood them. Many of them had been able to go to America for training programs, they had gotten to know Americans on a more personal basis than almost any other Soviet citizen was allowed to.

Anyhow, all of a sudden we had to drive ourselves around, we had to go pick up our mail at the train station or the airport and then take our mail out, including diplomatic bags and things; we had to sweep up the floors and empty the trash and we had to feed ourselves in

the cafeteria. And at home, we often had to find a new nanny or a new maid or whatever on a personal basis. I mean, it was pretty disruptive. And so everyone made do. Everyone basically pitched in on a schedule basis: you had a schedule worked out where this afternoon would be your time to go down and sweep the cafeteria floor or mop it or this would be your time to go out to the train station and pick up regular mail or non-classified mail and haul it back. And even the Ambassador, the DCM and the Consul General would pitch in from time to time to show that they were good guys. They really couldn't be bound to a schedule because of the kind of work they did but we would do it from time to time. And in Leningrad Sharon decided she would sign up for the regular schedule as a worker, She was a part-time employee of the Consular Section. So she also agreed that she would do her regular stint and so here she is, five feet tall, weighing about 100 pounds, and she would go out to the train station, including in the dead of winter, and haul in these enormous mail bags. I mean, you talk about mail you think well okay, big deal, you go out to the post office box and you pick up eight ounces of mail and haul it back; I am talking about hundreds of pounds of mail. I mean, it's not just mail that comes in, it's packages from J. C. Penny or Sears or whatever. It's heavy as hell and you have to haul it out of that mail car. It was incredible. Haul it out of the mail car; haul it down to the customs guys. Hopefully in the winter you could slide it along the snow and ice and then the customs officer would say, okay, along with it, and then you had to haul it down to the van, driven by another embassy officer who would help you schlep it into the van and take it back to the Embassy or the Consulate General. And in the Consulate General we knew when the mail was coming in and so everyone—

Q: This is tape seven, side one, with Dick Miles. You were saying when you knew that the mail was coming in?

MILES: Right. It came in once a week on a scheduled basis and so the word would be spread around by phone when the mail was actually ready to be distributed and everyone would then go down to the basement of the Consulate General and we would just take big bunches of mail out of these bags and there were pigeon holes, slots like an old fashioned post office box with a section name. You knew which section a person worked in and so you would put the mail in that section. There was a nice atmosphere there, lots of joking about it, and if some guy, especially a bachelor, would get a bunch of Victoria's Secret catalogs, you can imagine the joking about that and so on. I think while the adversity was something of a burden—we could probably have better done without it, but it did bring people together.

Well anyhow, a few years later we were able to work it out with the Soviet or the Russian government—I forget the time, exactly—so that the FSNs were able to come back. And so when I mentioned earlier the 1000 employees of the U.S. foreign establishments in Russia in 1993, of that 1000, probably a good 800 or more were in fact Foreign Service Nationals. There were a few third-country nationals—for example, a British citizen or an Australian citizen married to someone else or whatever—and so they would work for us as well. But basically the local employees were the Russians who worked there and they performed quite competent work and they got a decent salary for it. There were always difficulties which we then had to deal with and we had, of course, our administrative

section and the personnel people, but often it would percolate to the DCM level and occasionally to the level of the Ambassador and so this did take a good deal of time. Some problems were small but some were big and intractable. For example, the money situation in Russia was very volatile at that time. There was inflation, hyper-inflation even; there were still shortages and so people needed every little bit of cash which they could get. There was constant difficulty over whether the local employees got rubles or if dollars translated into rubles; what would be the formula. There was difficulty over off-shore savings accounts for retirement purposes; there were difficulties over whether they paid their taxes. In the new Russia, the old UPDK monopoly on personnel and services was quickly breaking down so what role did the embassy have in declaring who we did hire to the Russian authorities and reporting their earnings to the authorities. There was just one difficulty after another.

I remember one distinct problem that came up. There was a problem with the food in the cafeteria and we had to charge a little bit more than what it actually cost because we had to pay the cooks and the clean up people out of the "profits" of the cafeteria operation. Well, that meant that prices were actually probably a little bit higher than they would be in a cafeteria in the United States because we were buying a lot of our stuff from the military commissaries which charged a markup, and also you had to pay shipment costs from Germany to Moscow and so it meant that if the Moscow Embassy Commissary would buy, let's say, a pound of hamburger in the commissary in Frankfurt, Germany, for two dollars a pound, in Moscow the same exact pound of hamburger would cost you three dollars. And so we had to charge more for hamburgers and the other food in the cafeteria and this proved to be a burden for the FSNs and so we came up with a system of subsidies through chits. We would give the FSNs a chit which they could use in lieu of cash to help subsidize the cost of the meal.

Well, this all took working out and more time than any human being would care to spend on it unless you were an expert at these things. Anyhow, I knew it was part of the job, I didn't resent doing it, but it was certainly not something which I would have volunteered for particularly.

Q: How would you describe, during this '93 to '96 period, sort of the political atmosphere in Russia at the time?

MILES: It was a time of transition, of course, from the Gorbachev period to the Yeltsin period. Gorbachev always had tried to conduct his reforms in the context of the Communist Party and Yeltsin basically spat on the Communist Party and wanted nothing more than to do away with it. Since every single person in the former Soviet Union had some form of an intimate experience with the communist system, that was one hell of a transition. People fought in the communist bureaucratic way. I say communist; I mean, I'm not trying to define classical communism or anything, I'm just trying to describe the way life was in the Soviet Union in, let's say, the period following the XX Party Congress to the '60s and '70s and '80s and on into the '90s, the early '90s. For many people, certainly for people in authority, your direction and your discipline was through the Party. You could be transferred, promoted or disciplined through the Party. You might ignore it

and many people did ignore it, but it was part of everyone's life. People had to go to Party meetings; they had to accept Party discipline. You had to put in your time on certain projects—for example, special Saturdays called "*Leninsky subbotniks*", where you would go out on a certain Saturday and you would clean up the grounds around your building, plant trees or whatever, and so on. You had to participate in the various parades—May Day, November 7, etc. I mean, the communist system was certainly pervasive and if you lived in the Soviet Union in 1993, it had touched your life and that was true for every single man, woman, child and dog in Russia from the age of let us say six or seven up.

When you were a young person you became a member of the Pioneers; when you were a little older you became a member of the Komsomol [*Kommunisticheskiy soyuz molodezhi*], the Communist youth organization. Every child was in the Pioneers pretty much, not quite everybody was in the Komsomol, and then anyone who wanted any kind of a professional life or wanted to get ahead in some way would join the Communist Party. And for the military and the police, the KGB, the GRU and so on it was virtually 100 percent; for other professions it would depend on what you were doing and how ambitious you were in doing it, whether you joined the Party. But the Party and Party life pervaded everything. Now, of course, people knew that a transition was in progress. I met various people who had held the highest positions in the communist system, Politburo members, some of them. Yet I have never met a single person during that period—1993-1996—who really defended the communist system with the exception of some of the older people whose lives had been absolutely and totally disrupted by the collapse of the Soviet Union, people who had had a decent pension under the old system or who had had a place in society, a recognized place in society. The Soviet system, like all systems had its share of nepotism and favoritism, but in a certain sense it was a meritocracy. All of a sudden that was destroyed, absolutely and totally destroyed. And so I met any number of older people who were indeed nostalgic for the old days and, in fact, who could blame them? They had lost their place in life, they lost the respect which the society gave to them and which they basked in, of course, and they lost their savings and their modest pensions.

It's kind of an odd thing about the former Soviet Union but actually the percentage of homeowners or apartment owners in the former Soviet Union was probably higher than it was in the United States. An apartment or a small house was one of the very few substantive things that you could actually buy in the old Soviet system. Now in many cases you didn't buy it, because it belonged to your trade union or to your company and it was provided to you for life. You might pay fifteen or twenty dollars a month maintenance fee or something but hardly more than that and for that you would get a very small apartment but decent enough and one that you could live in. Well, all of a sudden that system was gone too and so in the case where people had actually bought their apartment they were generally alright, but in cases where they didn't, their situation would depend on whether their trade union or their factory management, which was itself struggling with the transitional period, was astute enough or cared enough to take legal ownership of the building and sell the apartments back to the people that lived in them. Sometimes the organization that had nominally "owned" the building would have to perform a bureaucratic shell game and acquire some kind of legal title to that apartment

or building. And in many, many cases speculators swarmed in who believed they had enough connections or a little bit of cash or out and out muscle, bribery and corruption, and they would buy the building out from under the people who lived in it. And so people who had lived in an apartment all their lives who were now retired maybe, unable to get a job now, found themselves basically out on the street. And this kind of thing still goes on, to tell you the truth, but at that time this was rampant and so you can imagine the effect on society. People's morale was—well, some people were excited by the new prospects, some people became extraordinarily wealthy during that period of time, other people though were devastated, absolutely devastated; it was an extremely mixed picture.

Of course, diplomats tend to deal with the more successful members of society, the people that are in power or who are running successful businesses. In the cultural sphere life was more difficult because the cultural managers and the artists and performers had a very hard time making the adjustment from a system of state subsidies to a system in which they had to somehow make their way on their own. Some of the Russians in the cultural sphere actually caught on to the new ways quite rapidly, much more so than I would have thought possible. Even in the last days of the Soviet Union, commercial sponsors would be accepted for musical performances or plays or whatever. At the beginning of a performance the announcer would come out and say we appreciate very much the sponsorship of the Lukoil Company or whatever and people would applaud that as a desirable and valued thing. But many, many times in those days in the early '90s, Sharon and I met with performing artists or cultural workers of one sort or the other who basically said they had no income and they were sort of squatting in their apartment hoping that the roof would not be sold out from over their heads. And they were doing their jobs or performing music or painting just because of their love for it and because they didn't have anything else to do, and hoping for some miracle that would occur and save them and their company, their stock company or their repertory company, and enable everything to go on in some semblance of the way it had gone on before. That is all changed now and many of the state subsidies have been reinstated. The business of corporate sponsorship has caught on big time and people understand now, where they didn't always understand in '92-'93, that in essence everything has to be paid for. And so people now expect to pay a higher price when they go to the Bolshoi or when they go to an ordinary musical concert. They expect to pay something for the ticket where before the ticket either cost virtually nothing, like a dollar or a dollar-and-a-half, or you were given your ticket by your trade union or whatever and so you didn't pay for culture in a sense. But now people understand that you have to do that.

And so in all these various ways people are making the adjustment, but it's still difficult in the year 2007 for a lot of people in the former Soviet Union. And in 1992 to 1993 it was damned difficult. And I'm quite sure that there were people who starved to death, whose children starved to death or who died prematurely because they couldn't get adequate medical care, they couldn't come up with the bribes to pay the doctors to look at them, or because the equipment at the hospital was broken or the pharmaceutical delivery system had broken down. There were no pharmaceuticals to be had within the old system—there was no penicillin or no pain killers or whatever—only under the counter. And if you can just imagine a society that was basically turned pretty much inside out,

almost like Germany or Japan after World War II, then that is what happened to the former Soviet Union. To paraphrase Dickens, it was not the best of times, but it was an exciting time for some and it really was the worst of times for ordinary Soviet citizens, for Russian citizens.

But it was exciting to be a diplomat there and to try to do that good which you could and to try to befriend people and encourage them, the good people, in these various spheres of life—everything from private enterprise people who were trying to make do in a market system which they didn't entirely understand to people who were still in state institutions, like the theater, who had lost their means of support and who had no idea how they were going to keep their institutions intact.

I'll give you one good example of the way in which the old and new systems sometimes clashed. It's a good example because it demonstrates both the good and the bad sides of the problem. In the late '80s and early '90s, the U.S. government had sold a considerable quantity of surplus grain to the Soviet Union and to Russia. And the way the Soviet and then the Russian governments had paid for it was to set up a trust fund into which the money would be paid by the Russian side, and the trust fund would then be drawn down by a Joint Commission chaired by the DCM of the American Embassy—that would be me—and by a high-ranking official of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture, and both sides would have representatives from the governmental institutions, in my case the Embassy Agricultural Attaché and in their case another official from the Ministry of Agriculture. There were also representatives of non-governmental organizations like Land of Lakes or the Winrock Foundation on our side; on their side, the Orthodox Church and there was another NGO on their side, I forget what it was exactly. And this commission then rented a small space for a secretariat staff, hired a few Russians to man it, and went into business. The staff would accept applications from entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector, and that could be anybody from a small farmer who just wanted to be able to plant seed potatoes to a businessman who wanted to start a brewery.

The Secretariat would do its examination of the proposed projects and would recommend action to the Commission. We would make loans of up to $500,000—I don't know if I mentioned the amount of money we had at our disposal. It was $40 million that we had accumulated in this fund—we would make loans of up to $500,000 to an individual entrepreneur and the money would be paid back over a period of 10 years at a very low rate of interest. It would be paid back not to the trust fund, which was designed to go out of business, but rather it would go back to the local political authorities; this was to get their interest and keep them supportive. The repayment money could be used for yet another project like paving a road or digging a well or improving the conditions in a local orphanage or whatever. And the Commission approved that repayment project as well.

Well, I thought it was a wonderful program and it worked beautifully for about the first year that I was there and then there was a kind of a palace revolution on the Russian side. The former Russian co-chairman, a very decent fellow who had been a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Agriculture, was ousted and a Stalinist type of individual was put in his place and it became quite clear that he wanted control over all the projects. He

wanted all the projects to go first through the Ministry of Agriculture for its vetting and its approval and then for the documents to be brought to the Commission for rubber stamping. And he wanted to replace all of the Russian employees in the little secretariat that we had with his own protégés.

Well, that was unacceptable to me and to the American side and so many a battle was fought over these issues, I can assure you of that. And I once told Ambassador Pickering, I said, "You know, Ambassadors often wonder what their DCMs actually do. Let me tell you what I do in this case. I keep you away from all these difficulties on the Agricultural Commission."

I fought that fight almost the entire time I was there. I felt the best thing to do with that dreadful fellow across the table from me was to get rid of this money as fast as possible and under the best conditions we could arrange, and so we began approving larger loans and more loans, even some marginal ones that we might not have done if we had had the old group in power. And when I left I think the trust fund was down to about $800 or $900 thousand and I told my successor when I briefed him, I said, "Look, let me just warn you about these guys on the other side of the table there when it comes to this bi-national agricultural commission. I mean, they will slash your throat in a minute and you won't even know it until you shake your head. So my advice to you is to continue doing what I have been doing and just get rid of this money as fast as possible, declare victory and close the Commission down." And that is what he did.

Q: I'm trying to think now, when you got there in '93, where stood Yeltsin and where stood Gorbachev?

MILES: Gorbachev was out already and Yeltsin was in, although political events were still happening at about that time. It may have been necessary because the system needed some shock treatment and Yeltsin delivered that shock treatment. Earlier, Yeltsin had certainly dealt with Gorbachev in a brusque manner. I remember watching a political meeting on the TV down in Baku. Yeltsin had the floor and Gorbachev had yielded the floor, as I recall, to him and was still trying to make some point and Yeltsin was quite rude in dismissing him, almost like an errant pupil, something like that. I don't recall exactly the timing of these things but it was quite clear that Yeltsin felt that he needed to humiliate Gorbachev publicly and to show that Gorbachev's way was the old way and it was now over, and his leadership, and Yeltsin's style of leadership was the new way. And that message got through, no question about it.

Q: How did we view Yeltsin? Because during the early Gorbachev period—we had shunned Yeltsin and, you know, played him up as a drunk and sort of a buffoon and all. When you got there, how were we—in the first place, how had he been viewed from Baku while you were there? You know, what were you getting on the feeling about Yeltsin, and then when you got there, how was he treated?

MILES: People in Azerbaijan were very much interested, of course, in the power struggle in Russia and in the future development of Russian society. But, unlike the situation in

Nagorno-Karabakh or the situation with regard to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Russians had not played a significant role in Azerbaijani politics or developments. Maybe they were too distracted and they had too much else on their plate. In the very early days, back in '89, '90, when the Soviet Union was beginning its decline, its collapse, some Russian military forces engaged in and around Nagorno Karabakh—sometimes on the part of the Armenian side, sometimes on the part of the Azeri side, and Russian troops and even commanders were in fact selling their vehicles, their weapons, their ammunition, their hand grenades to anybody who would buy them. I mean, they didn't care who it was, they weren't ideological about it. But other than that the Russians never really intervened in the Nagorno-Karabakh affair the way they did intervene in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. And they never demonstrated any significant military interest in Nagorno Karabakh after that. There were difficulties over the Gabala radar—the over-the-horizon radar station—up in the northern part of Azerbaijan. The Azeris wanted to exert their authority. They raised environmental issues. But the Russians just said, "This is important to us, we are going to keep it here, and we have soldiers to guard it. We are happy to talk to you about it but don't try to push us out. We're not going to be pushed out." And both the nationalist government which fretted a lot about it and the Aliyev government understood that this was a sticking point for the Russians and so the Azeris never tried any military attack or anything like that on it. And later the Aliyev government was able to sign a 10 year lease for the station to legitimize the continued Russian use of the radar station. Russia just was not part of anybody's thinking in Azerbaijan at that time. Events in Moscow were interesting, of course, and the Azeris watched them on television and I watched them too. Russian television was shown in Azerbaijan and it was fascinating to watch.

Q: Alright. But you're now up in Moscow and you're sitting at the center of the American view of Russia. How would you describe how—from Pickering through the political section and yourself and all—how did we view Yeltsin?

MILES: I don't want to speak for Ambassador Pickering, but we did worry a bit about Yeltsin's drinking and perhaps sometimes erratic behavior. But we also saw him as a person with some democratic instincts, someone who wanted to cast out the past in a dramatic way, and someone who was not adverse to taking serious steps toward necessary reform of the society in the sense of shaking up the ministries, privatizing state properties, trying to deal with these problems of social disruption that I mentioned to you earlier. And Yeltsin was willing not just to talk to the United States but to work with the United States on matters of mutual interest. After all, we have so many common areas of interest—everything from arms control and reduction to environmental and health issues. You recall the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, when our Vice President and the Russian Prime Minister would meet twice a year, once in America and once in Russia, and would agree on work programs for their governments, including the various ministries and departments that were involved over the next six month period, and would review what had taken place in the previous six month period. They would hold joint meetings; the Vice President and the Prime Minister would sit at a podium and then the Russian ministers and the American secretaries would appear and explain what they have done, and what they have not done to carry out the work program which had been

previously agreed. The Commission has been criticized and I know the Republicans didn't care much for it. I don't recall the history exactly but they probably wasted no time in dismantling it when they came into power, but I thought it was a very useful thing. It involved one hell of a lot of work on the part of the American cabinet secretaries and their departments that were involved, the Russian ministries, the embassies and the ambassadors themselves and people on their staff, but it sure produced a lot of interaction on the part of the staffs of the Vice President and the Prime Minister, on the part of the ministers and the cabinet secretaries and their staffs and on down to reasonably low working levels because these programs spanned the whole range of our interaction with the Russians. The projects became quite involved and detailed and they were these six months meetings coming on like clockwork so the bureaucrats actually had to work to be able to show some success when questioned by their political leaders. OK, some of this was pure PR, but there was also a substantial work program, and I for one was sorry to see it end.

Q: Were we keeping an eye on two elements of the society: one, of sort of a Russian military and, two, the security apparatus?

MILES: Oh, yes. First of all we were getting to know these people in a way which had not really been possible earlier and, in addition, Pickering would entertain the highest levels of the two military establishments. We had cabinet secretaries—imagine the Secretary of Defense coming over meeting with his counterpart. On my own, at the DCM residence, I entertained the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and his counterpart. I have personally entertained the head of the Russian rocket forces, the guy who had his finger right next to the red launch button. And the other members of the country team were doing the same thing at their levels. The level of exchange in all sectors of our societies was just incredible. I believe the Ambassador and I entertained just about everyone in Russia who should have been entertained. We drew the line at Zhirinovsky, but, even there, we assigned an Embassy officer to stay in touch with him and his subordinates.

Now I'm not saying that everything was sweetness and light—I'm not saying that we always agreed with the Russians on everything. Not long after I arrived, one of our key people was declared persona non grata by the Russian government. Actually, I don't think he was formally declared PNG; I think they told us that they were going to do that unless he was voluntarily withdrawn, and we did voluntarily withdraw him. We had the so-called "chicken wars" while I was there; we had serious difficulties getting the Russian government to enforce their laws on intellectual property rights; we had problems over landing fees for U.S. Government aircraft; problems of religious freedom and so on and so on. All these things took time and energy to work out, but the important thing is that we had a dialog with the Russian government which enabled us to resolve these issues one by one.

Q: What caused that near PNG incident?

MILES: You know, I can't recall the incident. It may have been nothing more than our throwing out some Russian official from the United States; as I recall I think it was probably that, just the usual reciprocal action on the part of the Russians..

Not to change the subject, but while I was there we opened the FBI legal attaché office in the Embassy. The office is still a very going concern and deals with many issues, not least with the problem of organized crime. I was quite interested in that myself; my son Richard is a policeman and he had always spent a lot of time visiting with police establishments in the various countries where I have been. He had done that in Leningrad, he did it again in Moscow, and so I already knew some of the police officials and I think I was able to help with the introduction of these FBI guys to their counterparts in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the various law enforcement organizations in Russian society. The Russian law enforcement structure was a little bit like ours: you had a lot of different organizations and a lot of people with various levels of responsibility, many of them overlapping. So it was something of a challenge to make sense of the Russian structure which had been virtually closed to us before, say, 1992. So we all spent a lot of time doing that and arranging visits back and forth, having seminars and workshops. We would have workshops on tax collection for their tax people and experts would come in from the Internal Revenue Service and conduct a workshop on that. I mean, we were involved in just about every form of human activity there is. But there were always diehards on the Russian side and there was some reserve on the part of U.S. intelligence and military people. There was some reserve, a lot of reserve I would say, on the part of the Russian military and intelligence people and, of course, there were some secrets that were not shared and there were some people that carried grudges from the past and never quite got over them. Every once in a while you would run into some pocket of resistance or whatever and you had to try to figure out whether this was a serious obstacle or not. Was this an obstacle you could simply go around? Is it something that you need to put aside for a while and try later. Never a dull moment.

Q: I was going to ask about this. One has heard about the, well, the expression was the Russian Mafia in New York and other places. From your perspective what was going on there?

MILES: Well, there was a lot of Russian organized crime activity conducted by Russian émigrés in the United States but with ties back to the motherland and so the FBI, working mostly with the New York City Police Department, set up a special task force on this and, if you can believe this, a Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs officer was seconded to the New York Police Department to work with them on these issues. That would make a good movie, wouldn't it? Again, the level of cooperation was incredible and so the two sides were able to wrap up some cases of financial skullduggery involving money laundering and whatnot; millions of dollars were involved. They were able to stop one scheme in which gas would be either purchased without paying taxes or stolen and then sold at a discount to taxi drivers and then the station would close and go out of business before they paid any taxes and before anyone could catch them. Then they would open another station somewhere and repeat the exercise. There were some cases of extortion,

robbery, violence, even murder that were involved. We found the Russians quite interested in cooperating with us on these things.

I am trying to think of examples of cooperation from other spheres. On the nuclear safeguarding area, now remember this was ’93, ’94 by now and it probably has gone on beyond what I will describe, but in those days, when was that? Fourteen years ago already. I remember taking a congressional delegation for the first time to the formerly closed city of Arzamas-16, which is where Sakharov had lived before he was put in prison and where he had helped to develop the hydrogen bomb—a sort of a Soviet Oak Ridge or Los Alamos, if you will. And so we went out, there was no commercial airport there, there was only the government airport, so we, this delegation of about six or eight congressmen was to go. I went with them to the special military landing field near Moscow. We all had to show picture IDs to the KGB guard to get on the airplane, first to get on the base, then to get on the airplane. And then it was kind of funny, we flew to Arzamas-16, a non-stop flight, and as we landed another KGB guard checked our picture IDs as we got off the plane. I thought, well, it would have been a damn good trick to transfer somebody while we were in the air. Anyhow, that was the security rule.

And then we went up to the facility itself, a bunch of rather nondescript brick buildings, low brick buildings with ivy growing on them, wood frame windows—all rather homey. It didn’t look like the kind of a place where the Soviet nuclear weapons had been developed. We were shown their little museum where they had examples of the early Soviet regular nuclear and then hydrogen weapons. And then we were taken into various laboratories where they were dealing with nuclear grade weapons material. Then we were taken into the storage area where this nuclear grade material was stored when it was not being used or experimented with and we were shown moveable cameras at the door of the vault in which the material was being stored and also inside the vault, and were told that scientists in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, could, with their joy sticks, move those cameras around—they were running 24 hours a day—and would be able to determine who was going in and coming out and whether nuclear weapons material was replaced after having been taken out, whether it was at the same level in the container as when it had been taken out, and the Russian scientists had the same capability in Oak Ridge. This is not a secret but it’s not known by most Americans, I think, and they would have been astounded in 1993, 1994 to hear about it and it has probably gone on further since then.

I’d like to recount a funny anecdote about that airplane by the way. We were just taxiing out to take off when the cabin began to fill with a kind of a white vapor, like fog, and you know, in that part of the world often the air conditioning in the airplanes doesn’t work very well and you will get, especially on landing and take-off, you will get what looks like fog coming out of the openings. And so I blithely told the congressmen not to worry, that this often happened and so on and this was just normal. Of course, they were getting a little antsy. And the mist got thicker and thicker and then I was beginning to get a little antsy myself and I asked the Russian who was with us as the leader of the group, “What’s going on? Is this a normal thing here?” And he said in good Russian style, “Oh yes, everything’s fine. No problem.” We continued to taxi out and then the plane stopped, the pilot turned the engines off and we were told, “Well we’re going to have to get another

airplane." So God knows what was happening with the heating and cooling system. I remember it was summer so it must have been the cooling system, but I'm glad we didn't go up in the air regardless of what the problem was.

Q: Did you ever run across Vladimir Putin in your time there?

MILES: Well, I first met him shortly after he came back from his KGB assignment in Germany. I enrolled my daughter Elizabeth at Leningrad University and he was the Deputy Director of the Internal Relations Section of the University. Then, a little later, I ran across him frequently in then-Leningrad as foreign economic adviser to the Mayor. I think I talked about that earlier. But in Moscow at that time, no, I didn't. I think he was brought to Moscow later. In the 1993-1996 period, he was still in Leningrad as I recall, in St. Petersburg, working in the city apparatus. Of course, in retrospect, I'm very sorry I didn't stay in touch with him but I don't think anyone in the world thought that he would become President of Russia. And he, as a former KGB-type, was not very forthcoming. He kept back a bit with the foreigners, you know, he was not a gregarious type. So no, we had very little to do with Mr. Putin at that time and I regret that because I had that nice entree from before and it probably would have been possible to have cultivated a relationship with him. But it was just one of those situations where you don't even dream that something is going to happen and then it does.

Q: Did we see, in the time you were there, did we see the growth of a variety of parties in that type of democracy or not?

MILES: We saw it maybe more than was real. The democratic opposition, if you will, was riding reasonably high and people in the various parties, Gaydar and others—I forget the names of them all—Boris Nemtsov, a very appealing young politician from over in Nizhniy Novgorod, a big city, and others. Lebedyev, a former general, was very active politically and we certainly tried to stay in touch with all these people and either Pickering or I would see them or entertain them as often as we could. We also stayed in touch with the Communist Party people. I have a mental block here, I can't remember the name of the Communist Party leader—it was Zyuganov. I have entertained Zyuganov in my home and Pickering saw him even more often than I did.

Q: Wasn't he considered to be pretty radical?

MILES: No, no. He was relatively moderate, frankly. Probably you're thinking of Zhirinovsky.

Q: Zhirinovsky is the man I'm thinking of.

MILES: Zhirinovsky was a rather radical and populist leader, demagogic, actually. I talked to Pickering about this and we agreed that it would probably be best to stay clear of Zhirinovsky personally but that we would encourage—we would name an embassy officer who would be the liaison with Zhirinovsky. We didn't forbid the embassy officers from including him in things from time to time. But we would maintain a little space

between ourselves and Zhirinovsky personally. And Zhirinovsky understood that and we were able to pass messages from time to time through our liaison officer and receive messages back and that worked pretty well.

President Clinton came several times while I was there and on one occasion when he came we organized an event at Spaso House to which we invited all the major political opposition figures in to provide some serious face time with President Clinton. And I remember, before the President arrived, trying to carry on a conversation with General Lebedyev. I believe Lebedyev was the most taciturn individual I have ever met in my life. I'd say something in Russian, like, "Well, it's a nice day outside, isn't it, General?" His response to that would be—he would sort of pause and then he'd say, "Yes." Then I'd say, "Well, I heard you had some difficulties in one of your recent public appearances"—you know, wherever it was—and he would say, "Not really." End of sentence. Well, he was old school, career general and all, and probably didn't feel very comfortable talking to any American official and certainly not any American official who was not actually the Ambassador.

And I remember going over to Nizhniy Novgorod once. We had a problem with a slight misuse of U.S. government funds. We had provided some assistance to the Russian Government to build some small but nice houses for demobilized Russian military officers and we had heard that in the Nizhniy Novgorod area some of these houses were being given out to civilians by the city administration. Boris Nemtsov was then the governor of the Nizhniy Novgorod Oblast so I went over to talk him and I explained the problem. He had his subordinates and his accountants there and they all denied that there was any problem with what they were doing. Sharon had accompanied me on that trip and I did a trick which I had learned from Larry Eagleburger when he was Ambassador to Yugoslavia. After listening to some of this bullshit for about 20 minutes, I said, "You know, Boris Efimovich, I wonder if I could speak to you alone. We don't need interpreters, my Russian is pretty good—we don't need interpreters. Let me just have a private conversation with you." And he agreed. And so out went Sharon, out went the note takers, out went the chief accountant for the city, out went the guy in charge of the housing program, and I said to Nemtsov, "Look, let me be blunt. We know exactly what's going on here. I don't believe a word of what your people have just told you and you shouldn't believe it either. And we're not going to do anything about what you have already done but if it's not stopped, that is the last house you will see us build in this oblast. We have a limited amount of money for this program. We'll just build them somewhere else. And so I really urge you to stop it but I'm not going to make any public fuss about it, this is a private conversation that you and I are having right now." And he said he understood and there would not be a problem in the future. And there wasn't a problem in the future.

Q: How about, well, Chechnya and maybe anywhere else? The centrifugal forces within what was left of Russia. But let's talk about Chechnya first and then—

MILES: Well, now that was a big problem and we were quite disconcerted by it and concerned about it. Washington wanted a lot of information; it wanted to know what was

going on. And the Ambassador agreed that we would allow Embassy officers to go down to the region near Chechnya—they could go to Ingushetia, for example, because the leaders there were keeping a very close eye on what was going on and our officers could talk to the leaders who were there in Ingushetia, and they could go to Dagestan and do the same thing in Dagestan; these are neighboring provinces to Chechnya. And of course we had our reporting on Chechnya out of independent Georgia and independent Azerbaijan, but that didn't amount to a whole lot at that time. But we didn't allow the Embassy officers to go into Chechnya proper and we cautioned American would-be visitors, reporters and whatever, from going down into Chechnya because it was just a damned dangerous place. We were able to keep up to some degree by having a periodic debrief from an outstanding Foreign Service Officer named Philip Remler. Philip is actually in Moscow right now. He was the political officer in Baku when I was there. Anyhow, he had been seconded to the OSCE mission in Chechnya. And he would come up to Moscow periodically and would give me and the other officers that were interested in this a debrief on what he saw from the standpoint of the OSCE mission down there. Philip was a very good observer and a very brave officer, I must say, and he proved it on those occasions and on others as well. So that also enabled us to keep our hand in. The Department, I think, would have liked a little more but I felt, and the Ambassador agreed that it was just too damned dangerous to send people down there; the information was not worth a diplomat's life.

I'll give you a couple of examples to prove that point. We had a young fellow come through who didn't speak Russian—

Q: This is a civilian?

MILES: Yes. Who had some press credentials from an obscure, I don't know, *Ladies' Garment Workers' Daily* or something like that—just some press credentials that he had gotten somewhere. And he was going to go down to Chechnya, and of course he didn't speak Russian or Chechen. He was going to go first to Ingushetia, which was usually the jumping off place to go into Chechnya, and then he planned to go on in and talk to people and then come out.

Well, we said to him, you shouldn't go. I didn't talk to him personally—the consular people did and the public affairs people did, and they said, "You shouldn't go. We don't allow Embassy officers to go down there. They speak Russian and they often have had experience. We don't even allow defense attachés to go. It's dangerous and really we can't protect you if you get into trouble." Well, he went down. He apparently was picked up a morning or two after he arrived in the capital of Ingushetia, at his hotel, was driven off by someone into Chechnya and disappeared. We never heard from him, you know—not a rag or a piece of bone left.

Then there was another journalist, who at least was a legitimate journalist and who spoke Russian. We gave her the same advice. She came through, I think she came through St. Petersburg, and the consulate people warned her, the same warning exactly. She went on down, went on into Chechnya and had her head blown off by a stray piece of shrapnel. In

this case it was just a thing that happens in a wartime situation; I mean, it wasn't as though she was kidnapped or whatever, which is what we usually feared would happen, or taken away by a Russian patrol and shot because they didn't know what else to do with her. In this case she was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Blew her head off. Had to notify her family and all and tried to retrieve the body. Very tragic business.

And then, the last one was the famous case of Fred Cuny. He was an American with a considerable reputation in international humanitarian operations. He had been in some very dangerous situations in the past, exploring difficult situations and trying to figure out what kind of humanitarian assistance might be applied to that situation. And again, he was advised not to go but, in this case, he had resources behind him. There was not one, but several important American NGOs that he represented; he had consulted with some members of Congress before he went; I think he spoke Russian. And he went off, and all we know is that a couple of days into his trip into Chechnya he disappeared and was not found again alive. We realized after his western organizational contacts had lost touch with him, because, again, he was experienced, and he was going to be phoning back in and so forth with a satellite phone. I was Chargé then, the Ambassador was away, and I remember the staff meeting distinctly. The consular people thought, well, it's just the difficult conditions in the field, these satellite phones don't always work. He's so experienced, let's not worry about it too much. And I said, "Let's do worry about it too much. This area is so dicey and this man has some connections, people are going to be really interested in this. Let's treat this as though something has happened to him right now and let's begin making whatever inquiries we can, as though something has happened."

And so we did that; from the first report of the lack of contact. And this inquiry quickly escalated because people began coming out to Russia from his organizations in America; there were editorials in the Western media about his disappearance; there were letters from members of Congress. In the end he was not found alive and months later, I think it was maybe even after I left, they did find remains. He had had, I forget, a hip replacement or a knee replacement or something of a unique nature and they found remains in which they were able to identify those metal parts as having been part of his body. And so it's clear that he died as well.

So in other words, all three of these cases turned out very, very bad indeed.

Q: Were we concerned, you mentioned the two other places—

MILES: Ingushetia and Dagestan?

Q: Yes. Now there and elsewhere, in what was still Russia, were we sort of monitoring the, well, the centrifugal forces? What was happening?

MILES: Well, yes. We in Embassy Moscow were interested in what was happening and what the Russians at that time called the near abroad. They don't use that term so much anymore but at that time it meant basically all the states of the former Soviet Union. I'm

not sure whether the Baltic States were included in that or not but we did monitor pretty closely the various things that were going on in the former republics and autonomous provinces of the former Soviet Union. And the situation was rather different in almost every one of them. In the Baltic States you had some difficulty with the treatment of the Russian minority and other things. And there were serious environmental problems left by the withdrawn Russian military forces and so forth.

In Central Asia there were problems of unstable governments. It was not the energy issue so much in those days, although there was a little bit of that; some of the American companies were interested in the energy resources in Kazakhstan for example, and of course they were always interested early on in the oil resources in Azerbaijan. To a degree Turkmenistan too but a little less; Kazakhstan was the big interest for them.

So yes, we did spend a bit of time reading carefully the cables from our embassies in those places and also talking to Russians in the government, in business, who themselves were interested in those areas, either just for commercial reasons or political reasons or even security reasons. There was a new commonwealth armed forces organization and the fellow who was in charge of it was General Samsonov, who had been the commander of the Leningrad Military District when I was Consul General there and so I went around to see him. I was the first diplomat, I think, to call on him. And it was very interesting because we didn't know what to make of this commonwealth armed forces thing: was it five feet tall, was it 10 feet tall? We just didn't know. And the defense attachés had never really been able to learn much about the organization. But because I knew him, I guess, I was able to get an appointment with him and so we went out into this, it was like a park-like area where they had taken over some buildings as their headquarters and I'll never forget it. First of all there was virtually no activity going on as far as the eye could see in this rather large space not too far from downtown Moscow; there were no military vehicles running back and forth; there were no troops moving around. And when we went into the building and walked down these hallways, it was quite clear that the place was dark and almost deserted and the officer would flick the corridor lights on as we went down the hallway. And so the General and I had a nice chat and he explained basically that he was in charge of a paper organization; that he himself did not know exactly what was going to become of it but he was going to do the best he could to try to coordinate things and see what could be done. And so we parted on good terms and I went back and the Defense Attaché also wrote his report and we were able to say this is not something that the United States needs to worry about for the foreseeable future.

Q: What about—I've just started reading this book called Second Chance by Zbigniew Brzezinski and he talks about Americans and others, Western Europeans, coming in after the Soviet Union broke up and all, coming in and making deals. I mean, these were sort of—they were people out for a quick buck, making deals with their Russian counterparts, and really it ended up with a bunch of Russians getting quite wealthy and a bunch of Westerners getting quite wealthy. Was this going on while you were there?

MILES: Oh yes, very much. There hasn't been any research on this at all, but it could be that some of these Americans became quite wealthy or made some money at any rate; I

wouldn't be at all surprised. But more often I'd say it was a case of the Russians taking advantage of naïve American lawyers and investors. I witnessed in some cases out-and-out charlatans and conmen—like carpetbaggers in the old South after the Civil War. People out for a quick buck, and there were quick bucks to be made, certainly. But also they were sometimes inveigled into investing money in factories which then turned out to have been emptied of their internal machinery and equipment, sold off for scrap or carried off to some other factory leaving the American investor with an empty shell of a building and so on. Environmental problems which were impossible to rectify but the person was already hooked in and now had legal liability for, you know, oil seepage or whatever, toxic waste and so on, and he had no idea it existed before he signed the papers.

On the other hand there were some legitimate businesses there. The American Chamber of Commerce got going at about that time and is now one of the largest in the world. American Express was very big then; credit cards were beginning to be developed and to spread and American Express did quite well, I think. Citibank was active in Russia. McDonalds, Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola—there were others as well. I knew many if not most of these people; I tried to entertain them when the Ambassador couldn't always do it and stay in touch with them. Many of them were interested in cultural and philanthropic activities, partly to help legitimize their efforts in Russia, at that time still in a transition from the communist period. Pure capitalism was frowned on and both the Russians and these American entrepreneurs felt the political and psychological need to justify their activities by saying that they were going to do something nice for society with the profits—I never saw a business proposal, for example, that didn't have something in there about "with the profits we are going to start an old people's home" or "we are going to dig some wells in this village" or some damned thing.

In fact, I used to counsel people about this. I said look, why don't you forget about this philanthropy right now and worry about making a profit and putting your business on a decent basis and worry a lot less about maternity hospitals and that kind of a thing. I understand it's a problem and I understand why you are doing this but don't distract yourself too much with this feel-good stuff. Of course, some of this social support was very valuable at that time. Some of these business people—both American and Russian—were helping to support the symphony orchestras, things of that sort, and Sharon and I were involved in some of those things too. We were able to help do some fundraisers. Junior Achievement got started about that time in Russia. Sharon was particularly active in helping get that program off the ground, especially later when we went to Bulgaria. We got to know the fellow who was president of the Academy of Sciences, Evgeny Velikhov, who is a nuclear physicist, and his wife, quite active. We met them in Leningrad when I was Consul General there and we kept up the relationship when we went to Moscow and Yevgeny was one of the founders of the Junior Achievement program in Russia. He still is involved in Junior Achievement and it's actually now, I think, the largest one in the world. So that kind of thing was going on and it was all very worthwhile.

At that time we had three Consulates General: one in St. Petersburg, one in Yekaterinburg and one in Vladivostok. I tried to visit each one at least twice a year and sometimes more than that. It's a hell of a long way out to Vladivostok, by the way. It's a nine hour nonstop flight from Moscow, and when I first started doing it you had to stop and refuel and it was an 11 hour flight. But I had to see how they were doing out there and make sure they didn't feel neglected. And I always made the point to meet with the American business people in these cities and see how they were doing. In general, they were having a very hard time. In the business world in Russia at that time there was a lot of criminal and sometimes governmental thuggery going on. In European Russia we could usually work with the government officials to straighten things out. Not in the Russian Far East, however. It was just too far away and the local mafia was just incredibly brazen in their collusion with the authorities. I mean, basically the authorities would entice the American entrepreneurs in, let them bring in equipment, air conditioning, chillers, freezers, vehicles, computers—goods of all sorts; let them take over a warehouse, put on a new roof, plaster, paint; and then they would block the American investors from ownership of their property. It was notorious; it was really pretty outrageous. The Consul General in Vladivostok tried to help but had great difficulty getting any traction on these difficulties.

And I had some knock down drag out fights with some of these thugs in power out there myself but I lost more battles than I won. This was their turf. They were in charge and given the somewhat anarchic conditions in Russia at that time, there really wasn't very much anyone could do about it.

Q: What was the feeling while you were there about the Chinese?

MILES: No particular fear of the Chinese. In fact, there was some trade back and forth across the border; there was also some trade with Japan and there were lots and lots of cars with right-hand drives out there because the Japanese were exporting their used cars to the Russian Far East.

They were also doing business with South Korea and I never was able to find out much about their relationship with the North Koreans, and my guess is that any trade which existed at that time didn't amount to much.

Q: Well, there wasn't much to do.

MILES: Well, they could easily have sold their goods in Korea. At that time the North Koreans were suffering, as they are today, and that's a big market, but they would have had to settle accounts in barter in some way. Ginseng is grown out in that part of the world and that's a big export item from the Russian Far East, a very lucrative thing. It's mostly grown wild and I know that there is ginseng in North Korea, so you could have helped pay in that way but there was very little of that. There was some Korean trading which took place in China itself but, at that time, I don't think the Russians were doing much in North Korea.

And in the rest of Russia you had the beginning of what they call the shuttle business. The traders were called "*chelnochniki*" [shuttle trader] from the word "*chelnok*", the shuttle that goes back and forth in a loom. Shuttle diplomacy in Russian is "*chelnochnaya diplomatiya*", for example, but the word was also applied to these mostly Chinese traders who would come up with big bags and backpacks and bundles on the train or the plane to the Russian cities and would sell cheap Chinese goods, anything from a thermos to pots and pans and then they would take back whatever they could take back from Russia, caviar or whatever, and sell it in China, and you also had Russian traders who were beginning to do that too.

Now, in terms of a larger business interest I know that there was some trade that was being conducted. I had a good friend who had become the Chinese Ambassador in Moscow. He and I had been young officers together in Moscow in 1976-1977 and we had, I would say, a good relationship at that time. We used to love to tease the KGB and the foreign ministry watchers because at diplomatic parties and other events we would go off into a corner and just talk to each other very rapidly back and forth. We spoke then in Russian; his English was not very good at that time and we exchanged information on what was going on, how we saw things, what might be happening in the immediate future. And it would just drive our Soviet watchers wild. He was the Chinese Ambassador during my second tour in Moscow and I used to see him fairly frequently. He was quite informative on trade patterns and current statistics.

Q: I'm just looking at the time. It's probably a good place to stop. Now, is there anything else we should talk about in Russia before we move on?

MILES: Well, there probably is. Let me think about that; I'll make a note of that.

Q: Okay.

MILES: When we come back next time I think one thing would be the military visits that we had because they were quite interesting and I have some good anecdotes. So at a minimum let me talk about some of those military-to-military visits and exchanges and then I'll scratch my head a little and think of others. There were some congressional visits that might be worthwhile and, yes, I think there probably is a little more.

Q: Good. When you talk about the military visits, if you would talk about what happened to the Far East Fleet. I've seen pictures of them, all those ships rusting there.

MILES: A pretty sad state of affairs.

Q: Okay. Today is the 21st of May, 2007. Dick, do you want to talk a bit—you were in Russia when to when now?

MILES: It was '93 to '96.

Q: And so you want to talk a bit about military-to-military.

MILES: Well, we had a really good military-to-military relationship going on. Some Russian military officers were being trained in American military schools and I don't recall if we had American military officers who were in Russian military schools but we did have some declared American officers who were studying in Russia full-time, living on the economy pretty much, to improve their Russian.

And then we had these visits, both ship visits and other visits, some of them rather spectacular. At one point, Ambassador Pickering, I think, was probably out of the country so I was Chargé and I attended the 50th anniversary of the ending of the war in the Pacific out at Vladivostok; you had mentioned the fleet out in the Russian Far East. And I had been to Vladivostok many times because of the Consulate General out there. I tried to get out there two to three times a year and, of course, I always tried to call on the fleet officers. And we did have some good programs involving the military out there.

For example our military was closing down a hospital somewhere in the Pacific Theater and they donated all the equipment, all the beds, all the medical machinery, bedpans, some surplus bandages and whatnot to the Russian military hospital in Vladivostok, which needed it desperately; got a lot of good publicity out of that, Russian television was there, the Oblast Governor was there and so on.

And then we did have this 50th anniversary of the ending of World War II in the Pacific event and they had invited representatives from the Chinese Navy and other navies to be present. I don't recall any Japanese being present; I don't know if they were invited or not. And in our case the U.S. Navy sent a destroyer, I believe, but they also found a one-star admiral who was stationed in Guam, I don't recall his name, who was right out of central casting. He was a big African-American fellow, must have been six feet five or whatever, and it was late summer so he was wearing his Navy whites and, my goodness, he really made an impact on the local population; they had never seen anything quite like that. I mean, he was spectacular.

I remember distinctly my wife Sharon and me waiting on the dock while the ship pulled in and the Russian Navy band was playing "Get Me to the Church on Time," which, after the sailors hit the beach, probably was an appropriate song. And so that was a lot of fun, a lot of coming and going and visiting back and forth. And the Chinese admiral gave the American admiral a magnificent, huge watch; it looked like one of these 18th-century pocket watches, big massive thing. I was drooling, I would love to have had it as a souvenir but the Admiral got it and he deserved it. He was about a hundred times more charismatic than I was.

And then of course there were the calls on the Russian commanders and then we were given a lunch, I believe it was, on board one of the big Russian ships that was there for the occasion. And I remember touring around, and I had spent two years at sea in the Marine Corps so I knew something about ships and what they should look like, and the Russian flagship was certainly ready for action, the sailors looked pretty good, the officers looked fine, but the ship itself was pretty dirty by our standards. It just had not

been kept very clean. You would see rust marks and corrosion where on an American military ship you would simply never see that, it wouldn't happen.

But I do remember going up on the bridge and I guess they just hadn't thought about it but they had still scotch-taped up on the bulkhead of the bridge silhouettes of the NATO warships for identification purposes—hopefully friendly identification in this case.

There was another memorable ship visit, this time in Murmansk, above the Arctic Circle. I went up to Murmansk several times. On this occasion, I went up for the 50th anniversary of the ending of World War II. It was to celebrate the allied convoys that had delivered supplies to the Soviet Union during the War. The Russians celebrate the end of the War in Europe on May 9, and it was an absolutely and totally miserable day up there; it's way above the Arctic Circle. And so Sharon and I were there and we knew how to dress for the weather, and all the diplomats had been told that there would be a place for them to stand during some patriotic speeches that were being held, and then the diplomats would be bussed up to a site on the cliff overlooking the bay in Murmansk, and the fleet was assembled there, and there would be more speeches and more wreath laying. And it was snowing pretty hard and the streets were slushy and all.

Well anyhow, to make a long story short, when we got to the first site I found that it would be politically awkward not to walk up with everybody else and I hadn't put my galoshes on or anything so I was in ordinary dress shoes. I did have a hat, thank God, and so I walked. I think it was about three miles; it was a very long walk pretty much uphill through the slush, through the snow coming down and, boy, I was a wreck when I got there. Cold wet and tired. And I had told Sharon, who was willing to walk and wanted to walk, that that would be absolutely insane, that she and the ladies should take the van and drive on up and we would see them there. But I walked, and so up we went and we did the honors up there on the top of the cliff. It was very moving actually, despite the weather. Everyone was there, the band played, the Soviet Northern Fleet was arrayed out on the water. Warm words were said about the American sailors both military and merchant seamen, who had given their lives bringing the cargoes through the German attacks. It was a memorable event.

I remember another occasion when a small Navy ship—I think it was a frigate but it might have been a destroyer, I frankly don't remember—was coming into, now this was a different occasion and they were coming into Murmansk to make a port call, a routine ship visit, and I was up there to greet them, along with a Russian Admiral who was on the dock with me. This was at the naval base in Severomorsk which we didn't usually get to visit. The ship was going to come to a full stop and then back into the berth and we could see that there was some confusion out on the water there. The Captain stopped the ship alright and nothing happened for a little while and then he came cautiously in, and it turns out that he had hit a large rock submerged out in the harbor and had thrown one of the propellers—happily it was a twin propeller ship so he was still able to maneuver. The Russian pilot, who was taken on board to bring the ship in, didn't have any harbor maps and had simply drawn the outline of the harbor and the port on the palm of his hand with a ballpoint pen and that was how the Captain was supposed to navigate in. Well,

somehow on that very careful map on the palm of this pilot's hand, he had not put the submerged rock and so the Captain pranged his propeller on it. Now, this was not a funny matter. And it was especially awkward for the Captain of the American ship. In fact, the Russian Admiral standing next to me on the dock was so agitated while he watched what was happening, that he actually said, "I can't stand this anymore. I'm going to go wait in the car." And he went back and sat in the car while the ship came on in. And then the Russians were pretty good about it; they sent divers down to inspect the propeller and eventually, I think, the captain asked them to take off what remained of it. There was a lot of talk about what to do and so on, and in the end, because it was a twin screw ship, they were able to limp out on just one screw. But it was very awkward and the poor Captain—I don't remember his name and I'm glad I can't remember it, he suffered enough. The Captain was a mustang—that is, he had come up through the ranks—and of course he was extremely proud to be an officer and to be the Captain who was bringing this ship in, the only ship on this visit into Severomorsk, a formerly prohibited harbor. Then to have that happen was pretty ignominious and it also, I imagine, put a damper on his career. I don't know what happened to him afterward.

The Navy is rather 18th century about these things. There would be a board of inquiry and, of course, the primary fault lay with the pilot, but the sad fact of Navy life is that the Captain is responsible, almost no matter what. I felt very sorry for that man.

Q: That is one of those things that if you are the Captain you are responsible even though, obviously, if a pilot is doing it—

MILES: You have the con [command of the ship], so to speak, and there you are.

I remember, now, this has nothing to do with the Foreign Service, but I remember, I was up on the bridge of the aircraft carrier that I was on in the Marine Corps, the Captain had gone below and the Gunnery Officer was up there, having taken temporary command, and they were refueling at sea, which is a tricky maneuver. And somehow the Gunnery Officer misjudged the wave action or the speed of the ships or whatever and the refueling ship went down at the same time that the aircraft carrier went up. Now, that aircraft carrier weighed 40,000 tons so we are talking about a hell of a lot of mass, and as it went up the refueling ship washed in underneath the, as I recall, the overhanging port side elevator, and then came up under it and you can imagine what a mess that made of things. So we went into Yokosuka, Japan, for repairs which was nice for the crew because we got a lot of shore leave, but that definitely was the end of the Gunnery Officer's career. And he was a very nice fellow, too; it was a pity, really. But if you are in charge, you know, there you are.

Q: Were you by any chance in Russia when they had the submarine Kursk accident?

MILES: No. No, that came after my time. I did see—you mentioned earlier the poor condition of the ships in the Far East Fleet, and, you know, they really were in pretty bad shape. Some were not capable of going to sea for any extended period of time but frankly they weren't as bad as the Northern Fleet up in Severomorsk and Murmansk. That fleet

was in very, very bad condition. First of all, weather conditions are much, much more severe in the far North. But second, they were making no effort whatsoever to control environmental damage, and so you had nuclear powered submarines that were just sunk in the water, beached on the—you know, halfway up on the beach and the rear half of the submarine sunk in the water, and God knows what the environmental impact was of that and the other abandoned ships that were there. The place was an enormous junkyard, in some cases involving nuclear materials, so really pretty awful. I'm sure, at least I fervently hope, that the radioactive material had been removed from those ships, but I can't believe that these wrecks were environmentally safe. And, too, that place is bleak enough to begin with. It's so far north that trees don't grow; there are only shrubs and bushes up there so the place is pretty gray and grim generally, and to have these ships sunk in the harbor there, well, it's just pretty awful really.

Q: You left Russia when?

MILES: Summer of '96.

Q: Where did you go?

MILES: Well, Strobe Talbott was Deputy Secretary and we have known each other for a very long time. He had prevailed on me to take the DCM job in Moscow against my own desires, which was fine; it was fortuitous, I think, that I did that. But as a kind of a reward for having survived that, and I mean that literally—that DCM job is a killer. I mean, it damn near killed one of my predecessors. He was found unconscious on the floor of his office. And I remember another DCM not too long before that whose health was ruined basically by that job. I mean, it just was a killer. Three years of at least 12 hour a day work and sometimes more. It was very demanding.

Well, anyhow, as a reward for that Strobe said, I would like to send you to Belgrade. You won't be the Ambassador, but you've already got the title so you don't need to worry about that. Now, neither the European countries nor the United States had ambassadors in Belgrade at that time, to show our displeasure with the Yugoslav regime. We all had "Chiefs of Mission." "And," he went on, "You will live in the Ambassador's house, you will get the Ambassador's car, you will get the Ambassador's pay, so it will be a good assignment for you. And our relationship is so bad that we're not sending anyone there on official visits; it will be pretty rare when you will be bothered by that. You've been to Serbia before, we know you can handle Milosevic as well as anyone and we think it's a good assignment for you." And I agreed; I thought it was a great assignment. I was happy to go back even with the bad relationship between our two countries.

And so I went back to Belgrade, replaced Rudy Perina, who had been there as Chief of Mission.

Q: Yes, I've been interviewing him.

MILES: Yes, good.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MILES: I was there from ’96 to ’99. I left in ’99 on the day the NATO bombing started so I saw a lot happen in those three years.

It turned out to be a very difficult assignment. It was good to be back in Serbia though. I had lived there six years previously, on two different tours and my wife Sharon and I, my whole family really, always liked Serbia. We liked the people and we had real friends there. We liked the Serbian language: Sharon and I had pretty good Serbian. And so it was pleasant to be back.

When I say “Serbia” or “Yugoslavia” I mean Serbia and Montenegro. That is all there was at that time due to the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina had all become independent states, so in the period 1996-1999 we are really talking about Serbia and Montenegro and of course Kosovo as part of Serbia. Technically, this entity was called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or “the FRY”—pronounced as in French fries.

I had a pretty good Embassy team. The administrative officer was a woman named Pat Moller who I really liked. She later went off to be DCM in Yerevan, Armenia, and when, in 2002, I got an assignment to Georgia I called her up and asked if she would be willing to be DCM twice and go to Georgia with me because I liked her organizational abilities. So she agreed to do it; she was very kind to do it. And I was afraid, you know: it’s kind of dangerous being DCM twice and I was afraid that that might not be a wise career move for her, glad as I was to get her. But in the end she was made Ambassador in Bujumbura, and she is out there now. We had an excellent Defense Attaché named Bill Fischer who because of his really quite heroic work, especially as we were getting ready to go to war, went way beyond the boundaries that the Defense Intelligence Agency would like to have set for him and did a lot of almost OSS-World War II type work. And I was able with some effort to get him into the Attaché Hall of Fame a few years later. It’s basically reserved for admirals and generals who had been in the intelligence field, but he did such excellent work that I put in a strong recommendation for him. It was rejected the first year and they only meet every two years to invite people into it and I raised holy bloody hell when he was rejected; I just made a pest of myself, submitted his name again and basically I said, “If Colonel Fischer doesn’t get into your Attaché Hall of Fame I don’t understand why you have the organization in the first place.” And I guess they were embarrassed or they just wanted to get me off their back or whatever. Anyhow they finally took a serious look at his qualifications and so he was brought in two years later. It’s quite an honor, actually, but if anyone deserved it, Bill Fischer did.

Well, I remember distinctly my first meeting with Milosevic. I had known him before when I was there from ’84 to ’87, when he was a rising Communist Party official, League of Communists in Yugoslavia, is what they called it, and also was with the bank at that time, Beogradska Banka, and the ambassadors used to call on him often. He obviously was a charismatic person and very intelligent, was considered to be pro-Western, was

considered to be a pragmatic technocrat. To be blunt, and I'm not doing this with hindsight or to make myself look good, but I was always suspicious of Milosevic and I thought that the Americans, that is to say our ambassadors, were sucking up to him a little bit too much.

In any case, when I met him almost the same day I arrived in 1996, he was on the grounds of his home in Belgrade entertaining some of the officials from Republika Srpska, the Serbian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Q: We're talking about after the Dayton Accords?

MILES: Right after the Dayton Accords.

Q: This is tape eight, side one, with Dick Miles. Yes.

MILES: Yes. The Dayton Accords were signed in 1995 and I was out there in 1996. So it was fairly close after the signing of the Dayton Accords and the establishment of the political and security arrangements for Bosnia and Herzegovina. So anyhow, the Republic of Serbia leadership was there; they were getting ready to leave actually, we just shook hands and said hello. And then I was introduced, in a way, since I already knew him, to Milosevic and—now, Milosevic is very clever, and he said, and his English is impeccable—he loved to speak English and he used to use idioms and swear words quite correctly, and he understood Americans and the West very well. He had lived in New York for a while as a banker and he was just a very intelligent man. And he said, "Now tell me, your custom in the State Department is that once you are an ambassador, you are always to be called "Ambassador," is that not correct?" And I said, "Well, yes, Mr. President, it is, but I choose not to be called "Ambassador" here because we've kept our diplomatic representation at what we call the Chief of Mission level so I should be called 'Chief of Mission'." And he said, "Well, I shall call you Ambassador." And I protested that and he did call me "Ambassador" for a few times and I kept protesting and then what happened was—it was not a bad compromise actually. When they would do the releases for the press, because they always did that, there would be "Ambassador comma Chief of Mission Miles called on President Milosevic", blah, blah. So that was an acceptable compromise. By the way, shortly after the signing of the Dayton Accords, the European countries all pretty much raised their diplomatic representation to the ambassador level. I believe we were the last ones to hold out.

Q: Well, as we kept it—'96, what was the situation in Serbia? Montenegro?

MILES: Well, Montenegro was puttering along pretty well on its own. The Serbs, who do have almost 50 percent of the population in Montenegro, were not particularly restless, and while some did look to Belgrade for leadership, others looked to the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica, for leadership. There was a little bit of a power struggle down there between a fellow named Bulatovic and the Montenegrin President named Djukanovic and they jockeyed back and forth between the prime minister positions for a while, and Milosevic would try to court Djukanovic but he also was favoring Mr. Bulatovic, who

was more loyal to him than Djukanovic was. But in Montenegro, happily, this internecine political struggle never involved civil conflict or violence with a few exceptions. There were some thugs that were occasionally activated during election times and they would create a bit of a fuss down there but in essence Montenegro was left to be Montenegro. I spent a fair amount of time down there because it always had been an interesting place, not to mention a beautiful place. And it had its own church down there as well, with a bishop, and I liked the bishop. And they had taken in a number of IDPs [internally displaced persons]—Albanians from Kosovo, plus they had a small Albanian population of their own. So Montenegro was genuinely interesting for us.

Well anyhow, this was—it was a quiet time in 1996. You know, when I went, Strobe had told me that we had such bad relations that nothing much was going to happen, I was there just to keep an eye on things. "It's an unstable situation and it will be good to have a pair of trained eyes and ears out there," he said. "So basically we just want you to stay alert, stay out of trouble, don't say or do anything stupid, and tell us what's going on." And for about a year that's what I did. There was an opposition to Milosevic, some very brave students and others who would conduct demonstrations against him and so on. It seemed in retrospect that there was just a constant stream of elections of various sorts, to the parliament or bi-elections or municipal elections or whatever the hell; it just seemed like I was constantly talking to candidates and encouraging a democratic election process, which was not always easy because it certainly was an authoritarian state. It was not exactly a dictatorship although it could turn ugly from time to time and I'll give some examples of that as we speak. But it had certain democratic overtones; there was a fairly free media, for example—TV, radio and certainly the print media—and anyone could listen to overseas broadcasts or buy overseas publications.

Q: Was there sort of a—wasn't there an anti-government radio?

MILES: Radio B-92, yes. It was quite outspoken and while they had difficulties from time to time they nonetheless survived. We provided a little assistance in the form of training and that kind of thing, exchange visits; more to encourage them than anything else. And they survived right up until the war broke out. So again, it was, you know, it was certainly not a democratic state. Authoritarian would be the word I would use. And it did have some democratic overtones. Most people could get a passport and travel abroad and so forth. And tourists could come and did still come now that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was over.

Because of the war we were paying a degree of attention to Milosevic. I think it's an accepted fact that the peace agreements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dayton Accords, absolutely could not have been signed without Milosevic's cooperation and his assistance. The leaders in the various Western capitals fretted over his behavior and where he might go with the power which he had acquired but they also gave him his due for having been useful and helpful in bringing about the Dayton Accords. I hadn't been involved in the Dayton Accords process but I had read a lot about it and I talked to people who were involved in it and I think that Milosevic did deserve considerable credit for the successful conclusion of those negotiations.

Q: In talking to Rudy Perina—this was before you—he said that Milosevic really thought that he would win back, I'd say, world acceptance because he played such a role there and felt he—everything would be fine and it wasn't.

MILES: Well, he did win a degree of acceptance. I indicated that the Western countries pretty much down the line, with the exception of the United States, raised the level of their representation to that of ambassador. Again, there weren't a great many visits by important people but there were some. I don't think at that time that the European countries considered Serbia-Montenegro, that is to say Yugoslavia, as a pariah state as they did later. So in a way he did win back a degree of acceptance. And there was no talk really of war crimes at that time against Milosevic. There was an interest in Mr. Mladic and—

Q: And Karadzic.

MILES: And Karadzic.

Q: Were they considered to be hanging around in Serbia?

MILES: At that time the general feeling was that they were resident in Republika Srpska and we knew that Mladic especially had come to Belgrade from time to time and I would make inquiries about that. And we heard—we never proved it, not to my satisfaction—that Mladic had been spending some time in Montenegro and I directly asked President Djukanovic if that was true and if it was true and he was still there, or if he were to return, we would appreciate Djukanovic's cooperation in helping us to apprehend him. And Djukanovic, I believe, lied through his teeth and said, no, he hadn't been; that he, Djukanovic, had made inquiries and Mladic had not been in Montenegro. My own belief is that he had been in Montenegro.

Well, anyhow, that was fairly low key at that point. There was a handful of Yugoslav army officers who had been indicted by the Hague Tribunal, seven of them to be precise, for some atrocities that had allegedly been committed and we did try very hard to get the then-Yugoslav government to turn them over. In the end they were turned over but I don't recall if they were ever turned over in Milosevic's time or if that came after Milosevic was ousted and the more democratic Serb government took power. In any case they are at The Hague now. But otherwise, the general feeling was Mladic and Karadzic, both of whom had been indicted, were over in Republika Srpska. While Mr. Milosevic had a lot of influence over there it was not his legal, political responsibility to apprehend them and turn them over. And in fact, I to this day don't understand why the allied forces there in Bosnia and Herzegovina and especially in Republika Srpska could not have found and apprehended those fellows.

Q: One gets a little bit suspicious in that the French more or less had control of the area and the French seemed always to play, certainly in those days, a rather devious game.

MILES: I wouldn't single the French out. I don't think any of the allied powers was interested in stirring up the people over there and maybe setting the civil war off again. At the least arresting Karadzic or Mladic would have raised the threat level to our troops there.

Q: When you got there in '96, what was the situation in Kosovo?

MILES: I used to spend a lot of time in Kosovo when I was there on my first tour, '70 to '73, and also my second tour, '84 to '87. I was always interested in Kosovo and I always felt that it was Kosovo that was the fracture point in the Yugoslav system. I underestimated the Croat and Slovenian nationalist feeling as I think almost all of us did and I just didn't see the fracture lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although historically those fractures had been there going way back before World War II. But we underestimated the strength of nationalist feeling in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The various Yugoslav governments didn't make that mistake and we should have paid more attention to their concerns. We knew that the Croat-Serb problems and the continuing difficulties dating from at least World War I and especially World War II were there. But these problems were like an old wound; in Bosnia and Herzegovina we thought those differences had been resolved basically. There was freedom for the Muslim population, they could worship freely and we just frankly underestimated the problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Anyhow, in Kosovo, it was quite clear that this was a very troubled area. And by the time I got back there in 1996, Milosevic had used the Kosovo-Serb tension and fears and hatreds, fears more than hatreds, to vault into power.

One of the first things I did when I arrived was to call on the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle. I had known him before and I always respected him, and I still do respect him. Pavle is something of a nationalist; he had spent many years as a clergyman in Kosovo itself and so he had a strong feeling for Kosovo and the church property there and the monasteries which go back a thousand years.

Q: They've got some beautiful monasteries.

MILES: Yes. I mean, Kosovo means a lot to Serbs and it's an important part of their history and religious heritage.

So the first person I called on was Pavle rather than Milosevic; not terribly diplomatic but I wasn't feeling particularly diplomatic at that time. And that got around and that made a good impression, I think, on ordinary people—they liked that. Then I called on Milosevic and had a normal relationship with Milosevic. He never said anything about my putting him in symbolic second place after Pavle.

Then I hurried down to Kosovo as soon as I could after I arrived; it's a four hour drive down there and, I tell you, I spent a lot of time on that road. I really owe a great tribute to my driver, Nesa. And he is favorably mentioned and photographed in Warren Zimmerman's book about his time in Yugoslavia. Nesa drove me all over Serbia-Montenegro—day and night and through some dangerous situations. He is the

only driver I have ever allowed to carry a pistol. I have never trusted the other drivers to do that. Some wouldn't have wanted to; others did want to and I wouldn't allow them to do it. But Nesa was weapons qualified and had such good common sense that I allowed him to carry a weapon. Happily, he never used it, never even had to draw it.

Well, when I went down to Kosovo I didn't find anything terribly surprising. The Kosovo Albanians had developed an entirely independent and separate system of government. They were raising money from within their own population to support independent schools; they were raising money from the Albanian diaspora, levying a kind of a tax, at times an extorted tax on the Albanian population abroad to help pay hard currency salaries to the Albanian teachers in their independent schools in Kosovo. Albanian non-governmental organizations in Kosovo were compiling lists of alleged and real human rights violations in the province. With a very few exceptions, all the police in Kosovo were ethnic Serbs.

I remember, it was actually my first visit there, I think, when I called on one of the Albanian human rights oriented non-governmental organizations led by Adem Demaci. Demaci was an older man, quite a nationalist and rather hotheaded. He had spent many years in prison for his beliefs and statements. I got to know him pretty well over the three years and I always was slightly uneasy around him. He was a prickly fellow. But he was also very intelligent and very helpful in some ways. Well, he gave me a long list of over 200 human rights violations, which included everything from being stopped by the police after having gone through a stop sign to police barging into someone's house and rousting everyone out of bed and searching the place and hauling the males off for questioning and so on. So there was everything in that list from soup to nuts.

But then I called on the Serb governor, he was like a presidential representative down there; someone who basically was in charge of the police and the people who maintained public order and a few other things. The writ of the Serb government had shrunk considerably in Kosovo. And I said, "You don't have any ethnic Albanians on the police force now." He said, "Oh, we would love to have them but they won't serve." And I said, "Well, be that as it may, they are not there now and yet you have these human rights violations that are occurring regularly. What mechanism do you have to deal with that?" I said, "For example, in Los Angeles when we had ethnic disturbances we set up a citizens' commission, a Blue Ribbon Commission. Warren Christopher (who in 1996 was the Secretary of State) was the head of the commission that examined the police-civilian relations and they made a number of changes and a review board was set up and so on." I explained all this in some detail and then I said, "What are you doing in that regard?" And he said, "Well, we don't have any human rights violations here so there is nothing to talk about really." And I said, "Well, what would an Albanian do if he had a human rights violation? Where would he go?" And he said, "He could come and see me." I said, "How many Albanians have come to see you in the last two years, let's say?" And he said, "None, because there haven't been any human rights violations." So that was the kind of conversation that you would have. And this was all friendly enough, but the Serb authorities had their line and they were sticking to it and to hell with you as a diplomat and to hell with the Albanian community; it was basically "Let the Albanian community

stew in its own juice and we Serbs are not going to help them out in any way whatsoever." Totally divided system, something like apartheid, I guess, in South Africa.

Well, I got to know other Serb representatives in Kosovo. I got to know the Orthodox Bishop down in Prizren, Bishop Artemije. I got to know the Albanian leadership. Dr. Rugova, who was the most revered of the leaders and later became President of Kosovo, although it's not independent even yet. Adam Demaci I mentioned, kind of a firebrand but an interesting firebrand. Mahmut Bakali, who had been Communist Party boss in Kosovo until the Albanian community basically withdrew from all that. Now this was very useful because I found that the Serb authorities never spoke to the Albanian leadership. They may have had a few spies and informers among the Albanians but basically they had no clue what the Albanian community was thinking and doing. And so in a way I became one of the few people who could tell the Albanian community what the Serb leadership was thinking and doing or thinking of doing, if you will, and vice versa. And that included up to the Milosevic level so sometimes that was useful and sometimes this relationship could be used to help diffuse some situations.

Q: Was there any sign of a formation of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the KLA?

MILES: Not in the first year. The antecedents of the KLA go back a few years, but I remember when the KLA first raised its head publicly and that was in November, December of 1997 and we saw a report in the media of people in Kosovo calling themselves the Kosovo Liberation Army. The Albanian acronym is UCK [*Ustria Clirimtare e Kosoves*]: UCK rather than KLA. KLA is just a translation in English; everyone called it UCK. The "C" is actually a "CH" sound.

Q: Sounds like Ustaši in a way.

MILES: Yes, well. So there were a couple of them who, according to the media, had shown up at a funeral and had had balaclavas over their faces; I don't recall if they had weapons or not—they may have. They held up their fists as a gesture of defiance. And I told our people, I said that's a very serious development, we haven't seen anything like that since 1945-1946, and so we need to absolutely stay on top of this. And I went down and talked to the Albanian leadership about it and they denied any knowledge of this and I said, "Well, according to the media, there was a field of some 4,000 people attending this funeral and here are photographs of these guys, uniforms and all. What do you mean, you don't know anything about it?" And they said, "Well, we'll look into it, you know, these are not our people, these must be from outside." It's the same bullshit that I used to hear in the civil rights movement in the South, you know—that no one could be from the local area, they all had to be from outside.

Well, anyhow, I took it absolutely seriously and you can bet the Yugoslav authorities were doing the same thing. That appearance in late 1997 was followed by a rapid crescendo of violent acts on the part of people calling themselves UCK. You would have drive-by shootings into police stations. A police station in that part of the world is—you know, you've been there—it's just a little concrete block building with a couple of

grubby windows and a small door and it's a very primitive sort of a building. So when you'd fire into it with small arms or throw a hand grenade up against it or, even worse, fire an RPG-7 into it, you can cause some serious damage and you can kill people. Well, there were repeated incidents of that sort. There were reports of Albanian forest workers being killed by the UCK and the UCK reason for that was, these are people who were being paid by the Serb authorities not just to maintain the forest but to stay on the watch for anyone infiltrating across the border illegally from Albania, and so they were beginning to be systematically picked off by the UCK, just simply shot. And in talking to Rugova and Adam Demaci, who was the de facto leader of the more radical wing of the "legitimate" Albanian political movement down there, I said, you all need to get hold of this situation; you need to issue statements condemning the violence. You can say you condemn violence on anybody's part—by the government as well as by these hotheads—but your silence indicates that you are tolerant of these acts. And, boy, they wiggled and squirmed; they didn't want to do make any statement like that. Adam Demaci never did do it; he said basically these young men are the patriots of our nation, they are heroes; I may not condone everything they do but I am not going to issue any statement critical of their action. I mean, he was very blunt about it. Dr. Rugova, who always was a great temporizer, I think that is a noun, said, yes, I understand, but it's difficult to do, our political situation is delicate, there are more radical people who could push me out of my position if I take an overly moderate stance or one which might be considered to be pro-Serb but I will consider it. And in the end Dr. Rugova did issue a kind of a mealy mouthed statement along the lines I suggested condemning violence. But I believe he only did it once and he never was willing to repeat it and meanwhile the violence began to grow and to grow. So the Albanian leadership really didn't quite know how to handle these fellows and that was the beginning of the drift toward the violent confrontation with the Serbs which did occur. And I haven't yet described the Serb retaliation and punitive action against the Albanian community, but of course it followed those Albanian acts of violence and from that philosophy of action and reaction came the development of the intolerable situation which we saw in late '98, early '99, which finally caused NATO to go to war and to solve the situation by force.

Q: Were there sort of gangs like Arkan's Tigers or the equivalent doing their thing on the Serbian side?

MILES: Not at first. At first you had action by armed paramilitary units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the so-called interior troops. Milosevic had recentralized the police forces. Tito had decentralized the police forces so that, until the '90s, you had something like the situation in the United States with the local authorities being the ones who would select the local police chief. Under Tito, there were police organizations at the federal level but they served more as coordinators than anything else. But Milosevic recentralized the police authority. There were local police in cities and towns, of course, but they were part of the Republic of Serbia Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was itself subordinate to the State Ministry of Internal Affairs. We referred to all these police forces by the somewhat generic acronym, MUP, pronounced MOOP. By the way, our military never mastered this pronunciation. They insisted on pronouncing it MUP, like "pup". MUP stood for "*Ministerstvo Unutrasnikh Poslova*" [Ministry of Internal Affairs].

At the same time there was of course the service of state security or SDB *[Sluzba Drzavne Bezbednosti*]. The military had its own counter-espionage service but I don't need to go into all these details. Now, the MUP had something like a small army. They were armed with relatively sophisticated weaponry up to and including vehicles armed with anti-aircraft cannon. The weapons on these vehicles are heavy machine cannon capable of battering down a stone wall or the walls of a house. I had mistakenly, as it turned out, thought that according to the Geneva Convention it was against the rules of war to use such weapons against ground targets. I thought you were supposed to limit them to air targets but Milosevic didn't care for such subtleties even after I had pointed this out to him. Well, I found out after I had left Serbia that I was wrong. There is no such prohibition, but I doubt that Milosevic knew this either so maybe my admonition slowed down the Serb use of these weapons. I don't know.

As part of their arsenal down there the MUP had heavy and light machine guns, they had mortars, they had armored personnel carriers, both track and wheel, and of course the usual range of small arms, pistols and automatic rifles. So they were extremely well equipped and what happened, of course, as the UCK attacks continued and grew, the MUP began to organize itself in a way which I found rather similar to the way in which the German forces had organized themselves to struggle against the Yugoslav partisan movement in World War II. And I suppose if you are a Serb and you look back in history that would be a model you would tend to follow. But what that meant was you used punitive raids and retaliatory raids as a means of cowing the local population and discouraging them from offering safe haven to UCK bands or to discourage young men from going off from the village and the farm and joining the UCK. And of course the Serb authorities also heightened the patrols along the border and they tried to stop the infiltration coming in from Albania. Now, those were not basically Albanian Albanians that were coming across the border from Albania; they were basically Diaspora Kosovar Albanians who would rally in Albania and then infiltrate across the border with their weaponry which they had bought in the West, including some in America, and including some American-Albanians as far as that goes, and would then join the fight, which grew rapidly. I mean, it was amazing how from virtually a zero beginning in 1997 it became quite widespread in 1998.

Q: Was anything happening from Macedonia?

MILES: No, not particularly. There were some desultory talks going on to resolve a few—seven, I believe—disputed points along the border but these were not really contentious. No, Macedonia was not on anybody's radar screen at that time. They had their own problems down there but, at that time, they were not particularly related to the problems in Kosovo.

Well, you began to have these charges and claims by both sides which were often preposterous, numbers grossly inflated, atrocities real or imagined, and it was difficult for anybody to understand what exactly was going on. It would be like a bunch of civilians trying to understand what was going on behind the lines in World War II Yugoslavia; it

would have been damned near impossible unless you were willing to go and join the units that were fighting and even then you would see only one side of it. And so as the situation worsened, Madeleine Albright, by then Secretary of State, became increasingly concerned, and others in Washington became increasingly concerned, and she sent Bob Gelbard out as a special envoy. Bob later became our Ambassador in Indonesia, but I think basically he was a poor choice as special envoy to Milosevic. He didn't know how to handle Milosevic. But, at any rate, he came, he went to Kosovo, he spoke to Milosevic, he tried to figure out what was going on, and then finally, following a somewhat intemperate session with Milosevic, which I guess I don't want to go into detail about here, Milosevic in essence declared him persona non grata and said he wouldn't deal with Bob anymore. He said it in quite earthy language and I would rather not repeat it but that took care of Bob as special envoy.

Q: I'm just trying to understand: here you are—so what was your role? Was this somebody sent in from the State Department on a mission or, I mean, were you superseded or what?

MILES: As the Russians say, "*Da i net*—yes and no." Well, it is often the case in crisis situations that a special envoy will be brought in. I mean, look at Dick Holbrooke resolving the Dayton Accords. So that's not unusual and I didn't have any problem with Bob particularly although, again, I didn't think he had the temperament or the understanding for the situation that he should have had. But he was intelligent and he had background and he had Madeleine Albright's ear and so I didn't have any problem with that. I was with him all the time, hip and thigh, and when he would come, of course, he would have the same kind of conversations I was having. And when he left I was still there to pick up the ball and carry it. So it didn't bother me to have Bob doing that, but his approach and his attitude, his style, bothered Milosevic to the point where he declared that he wouldn't receive him anymore. And then Dick Holbrooke was brought in and he at least had had some rapport with Milosevic from the Dayton negotiations, he could handle Milosevic and, of course, Dick was no stranger to crisis situations and difficult negotiations.

So Dick came in. He actually brought Gelbard with him on the first visit as a kind of a face saving gesture for Bob and Milosevic was tolerably polite to him and then Bob disappeared from the scene and was never seen in Belgrade again. And Dick Holbrooke stuck with it until virtually the day the bombing started, and he was excellent. Dick is a creative genius with superhuman energy and despite the fact that he had an infected foot during the entire time—I mean, it was driving him nuts—he performed, I thought, heroically in this effort with a little team that he had developed, some people from the NSC and from the State Department and from the Pentagon. George Casey, who later was in Iraq, was a one-star general then. He came along. We used to kid George that Dick was bringing him along just so he could get those little airplanes from the military to be able to fly in and out of Kosovo rather than driving down. But, actually, George was a great asset; George paid attention to what was going on and he learned a lot, I think, from being in that situation and from being exposed to Dick and the rest of us as we grappled with the situation.

Well, Dick had several good ideas in addition to trying to talk sense into both the Albanian leadership—not including the UCK at first—and also the Yugoslav and Serb leadership; that is, mostly Milosevic. I don't remember the exact sequence of events, but when I went there in the summer of 1996, Milosevic was President of the Republic of Serbia and while I was there he decided he would rather be President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, such as it was at that point, Serbia-Montenegro, basically, and quickly performed the political maneuvers necessary to enable him to accomplish that. I'll skip over the internal political maneuvering that went on at that time, but, in the end, Milan Milutinovic became the President of the Republic of Serbia, and Djukanovic, as I indicated, was down in Montenegro, and so, after Dick came on the scene, we dealt primarily with Milosevic, Milutinovic, the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Nikola Sainovic, and the appropriate generals from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and from the military, the Yugoslav military—and, of course, with the Kosovar Albanian leadership.

Dick had several really excellent ideas, one of which, I think, may have been unique—at least I can't think of an exact precedent for it. In order to help sort fact from fiction in these constant charges and countercharges and allegations and excuses and so on, an international corps of diplomatic observers—the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission [KDOM]—was formed. It was a free-standing organization, under the vague auspices of a group of countries called the Contact Group. KDOM was reasonably large, eventually growing to between 800 and 1000 personnel divided into national units. So there was an American unit which had about 200 people in it, a British unit, a Russian unit, a German unit, an Italian unit and so forth, the French maybe, I don't recall exactly—I think the French had a unit. Housed separately and loosely coordinated both in the field through regular meetings of the leaders of the various units but also in Belgrade by weekly meetings of the appropriate ambassadors of the countries who had units in the field. The officers themselves, at least as far as the American unit went, were a combination of serving military officers, serving Foreign Service officers, diplomats and a few spooks and other civilians of various sorts. I know it sounds Rube Goldbergish but it actually worked well. We assembled a rather large fleet of armored vehicles, getting from the British some armored Land Rovers from their operations in Northern Ireland. These had the unfortunate design flaw that when you were sealed up inside, the ventilators would suck the exhaust smoke back up into the vehicle. I don't know what those poor Brits did up in Northern Ireland but our people down in Kosovo, which is much warmer, of course, learned that there was no way they could drive around in those things all buttoned up; they had to keep the vents open to be able to breathe. And we got a few vehicles from the American Army and I remember many discussions that I had on the phone with Wes Clark's deputy, Admiral Abbott, and with others trying to pry these armored vehicles and other things out of the American military inventories.

These were exciting times and I remember when we first kicked it off. Dick was not there at that moment, but we had an agreed upon date when we would begin the first patrol of these independent units and the Russian Ambassador and I were there and a few other ambassadors but there was a lot of emphasis on the Russians and the Americans working

together and so the Russian Ambassador and I got into one of the American armored Land Rovers; we had my flag on one fender and his flag on the other fender and we went off on kind of a Potemkin Village-type patrol, going up through Serbian checkpoints and then on down to a UCK checkpoint and then back, followed by at least 100 TV and print media people and it all made magnificent PR, the Americans and the Russians working together to try to help resolve this important issue.

Well, in the context of its limited goals, the KDOM worked fairly well. It brought some sense of reality to what was happening and began to provide us with some reasonably accurate figures of numbers of fighters and of who controlled what parts of the territory and so on because by now the UCK had basically denied entry into certain parts of Kosovo to the MUP forces or any other Serbian forces; they were operating what amounts to a Free Kosovo territory. But the KDOM people could, in theory, go in and out of these areas and try to keep an eye on what was going on and try to evaluate it. So it was very valuable. But they were unarmed and they had to back away from any kind of a confrontation. They sometimes served a role in getting two sides to back off and avoid shooting at each other. Sometimes they couldn't and sometimes there was shooting as a result despite their best efforts. I think the real miracle was that no one from KDOM was seriously hurt or injured during the several months of its existence. But in the end it proved inadequate for the situation, too small, too diffuse. It lacked a central reporting authority; individual country units reported back to their own countries. They were, in a sense, coordinated by the appropriate ambassadors in Belgrade but that is where the reports basically ended; they either ended in Belgrade with the ambassadors or in the various capitals where they were not necessarily shared with anybody. And, due to the lack of a real command structure, it was difficult to see how the numbers could be ramped up to more than the 800 to 1000 that they had.

Well, things continued to deteriorate and Dick's second idea, which was also a good one, was, let's have a full court press by the OSCE to do a job similar to that which had been performed by KDOM. KDOM will leave, will go out of business, but OSCE will muster eventually up to 2000 observers with more sophisticated vehicles, still unarmed, but with a unified command structure and a more sophisticated reporting system. Reports will go up to the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna. The Contact Group ambassadors could stay in touch, could go down and visit Kosovo could continue to have their meetings in Belgrade. The head of this organization, called the Kosovo Verification Mission, KVM, was American Ambassador, retired, Bill Walker and he would meet periodically with the Contact Group ambassadors in Belgrade.

Q: Bill Walker?

MILES: That's right.

Q: I have interviewed Bill.

MILES: Okay. Well, he probably talked to you about this.

Q: Yes, but I'd like to get your perspective of this.

MILES: Yes. Well, it also worked quite well; it was more effective than the KDOM because of its superior staffing and more centralized and weightier authority, but it had the same limitations, that people were not armed, they were not there to prevent hostilities, they were there to help limit them as best they could and then to back out of the way and to observe and to report; that was their function and they did that very well. But in the end that proved inadequate also and so we moved closer and closer toward war, and I'll talk a little more about that.

Bill and some of his people were on the scene of the Racak massacre in January 1999. Serbs had gunned down a significant number of Albanians and had left the bodies all tangled together in a shallow ravine near the village of Racak. The TV was there with Bill and so he was shown on TV knee-deep in bodies, and announcing to the media his outrage and his belief that these were Serb forces who had mowed down these Albanian boys and men. I would probably have done the same thing if I had been in Bill's position but it was rather heady stuff, a little bit intemperate, to do that on the spot rather than try to investigate it in a more calm way. We had excellent forensic scientists coming out of Sweden leading burial site teams and crime scene investigation experts to help to determine what had happened; what kind of weapons were involved; did it look like it was systematic execution or the results of a fight; had bodies been dragged into a central place from different fighting positions or what. So there was a precedent for more scientific examination of the scene before making such declarations. But I think Bill's temper, his outrage, had reached its breaking point.

Q: Well, sometimes one gets too damned careful. You know, I mean, when an outrage is an outrage it's probably just, you know, to make an overly cold-blooded report, I mean, it's—

MILES: Well, I agree. But anyhow, the way in which it was done, announcing it to the media and so on, right on the spot, limited Walker's and the OSCE mission's influence with Milosevic; KVM never quite recovered from that. And anyhow, we went to war shortly after that. I don't recall exactly when the Racak massacre occurred; I believe it was in early '99.

Q: Well, back to Serbia, not the Kosovo-Serbian thing—the rest of Serbia. What was happening during this period? I mean, were there anti-Milosevic forces? I think this was when they were demonstrating in Republican Square and all that sort of thing.

MILES: There was a rather well organized democratic opposition, not entirely united, but not as disunited as some of the opposition that you see these days in Georgia, for example, or in Azerbaijan. It was much more united than that. So you had figures like Vojislav Kostunica who is Prime Minister of Serbia today; Zoran Djindjic, with his own party, who was later assassinated; Vesna Pesic; Vuk Draskovic, who I believe is still the Foreign Minister; and others as well, not to mention the students. And they were all conducting quite frequent demonstrations against Milosevic but they weren't doing it so

much over outrages that were occurring in Kosovo. In fact, Vuk Draskovic back in the 1980s had been one of the hotheads calling for greater Serbian action to forestall increased Albanian nationalism in Kosovo. So don't think that just because they were very vigorous opponents of Milosevic that they were necessarily opposing his policy in Kosovo. I think some of them didn't like the bloodshed in Kosovo, but Milosevic's handling of the Kosovo situation was not a battle which they chose to take on. So the opposition to Milosevic focused more on his undemocratic rule, on the negative role of his wife who did exercise a degree of political influence, and other factors.

Q: Yes, what about Milosevic's wife during this time?

MILES: Well, she was a political figure in her own right. She also had a newspaper and magazine column where she would express her somewhat naïve thoughts about this or that. The conventional wisdom was that she pushed Milosevic to the left and toward a harsher line than he sometimes might be willing to take. I don't know whether that's true or not. I'm about the only Western diplomat in the period, '96 to '99, who was able to meet with her and have an interview with her, and I only accomplished this by bullying the leadership of her party and by leaning on Milosevic a little bit. And by the way, it was very clear that Milosevic and his wife had a very close relationship, and when I would be in some close conversation with Milosevic, he would sometimes very fondly mention his wife. He had her picture on his desk; he never, ever criticized her, at least not in my presence. And we know from other sources how close her relationship with him was; it was almost obsessive in a way.

Well, in any case, after it became clear that I was not going to be allowed to meet Mira Markovic, I said to the people in her party that unless I am able to call on her the way I have called on every other single person in Serbia and Montenegro of any significance, we will declare her and her party, if you will, persona non grata. There will be no more invitations to Embassy events, there will be no trips to America, we'll discourage American visitors from calling on other members of her party. You will just find us closed off to you and that will remain in effect until I am able to have a meeting with her and have a chat with her. And, I added, I'm not going to be bothering her every 15 minutes about this, but it's ridiculous that I'm representing U.S. interests in this country and here this woman is with enormous influence and playing a public role and I am not allowed to see her.

Well, several months went by to no avail and we did in fact send the whole pack of them to Coventry and then, finally, I was told okay, you can come and meet with Mira Markovic. And so I took an Embassy officer along and went down to the party office building. I hadn't talked to this woman for 15 minutes before I realized that she was suffering from rather severe mental illness and was not a normal person. And so I decided, well, okay, I'm probably never going to call on this woman again and frankly there probably isn't a whole lot of sense in trying to call on her again but I'll make the most of this occasion. And so I stayed there for two hours and talked about every damned thing that I could think of that might be of interest to people back in Washington. And all I ever got from her in those two hours was, "You are exaggerating the situation. You

don't understand our situation. Things aren't as you believe they are. You must be patient. We know how to handle these situations better than you; this is our country. We appreciate your concern but you shouldn't be so concerned." In other words, it was just one platitude after another and mixed in with a lot of Marxist-Leninist claptrap about how in Yugoslavia the workers own the means of production and we don't have the capitalist system here, we allow small enterprise and small scale agriculture but the people themselves hold the major assets and they are very happy with that, and so on and so on and so on. I just never got anywhere with her on any subject whatsoever and I tried every subject known to man except her family; I stayed away from that. The report made very interesting reading for people back in Washington. I expect it made up the entire dossier on Mira Markovic because there was probably nothing else in that folder but newspaper clippings and there was never anything else in it after that either because I never bothered to call on her after that. And she remained stalwart up until the end and even, as far as we know from the media, encouraged his resistance up until the moment when they came to haul him away to jail.

Q: What was happening inside Serbia? Were there gangs, corruption, that sort of thing going on?

MILES: There were some criminal elements but only those that were tolerated by the authorities. There were no significant criminal elements that I was aware of that were not condoned by the authorities. It was that kind of a state. A lot of business was being done in a semi-legal fashion, as you can imagine, through cronyism and state contracts and lack of objective, transparent bidding and that sort of thing.

Since we are on the subject of crime, I should mention the car-jacking of my wife, Sharon. Sharon worked for the International Organization for Migration located in downtown Belgrade. She was driving home one day and had, most unfortunately, left the car doors unlocked—a security no-no. We have reconstructed what happened and we think that, when she was stopped at a red light, one of the ubiquitous window washer guys, saw that her doors were unlocked and signaled his accomplice to come and jump in the back seat of the car, This fellow stuck a very large pistol in her side and told her to drive out of town. Now she had her seat belt on and the gunman seemed rather nervous—his hand that held the pistol was shaking—so she was afraid that if she tried to unbuckle the seat belt and make a run for it, she would be shot right where she was. Ditto, trying to crash into something. Anyhow, on the highway out of town she pretended to be an addled, stereotypical woman driver, driving erratically, saying, quite falsely, that she was not used to driving on the highway, that her husband only allowed her to drive back and forth to work and so on. In fact, she is a better driver than I am and she loved to drive that BMW 7 series car fast.

By the way, the newspaper accounts were more interested in the BMW 7 than in the car-jacking itself. A "*mocna zver*—powerful beast" one said. That description became a family joke

After a little bit of these theatrics, she pulled over and said, “I can’t do this anymore. You can have the car but I’m leaving.” And she unbuckled her seat belt and got out. That was cool! Well, she not only wasn’t shot, but the fellow gave her her handbag through the window. He took off in one direction and she took off—on foot—in the other. Later he had an armed standoff with a policeman and later yet, after giving the car an amazing number of dings, managed to drive into a ditch and break one of the wheels. He was picked up shortly after that and was tried and sentenced to, as I recall, 15 years in prison. It seems that he had only recently been released from prison after finishing a short term for manslaughter.

When she made her police report she had said that the fellow had a very big pistol. The police were somewhat condescending about that description, but, later, when I was talking to the head of the MUP criminal police about all this, he said. “You know, your wife has very strong nerves—and, by the way, that really was a very big pistol!”

I did create something of a faux pas shortly after I arrived. It’s always been my habit to spend a lot of time on the economic system of a country and so I went off to visit a steel factory south of Belgrade and I didn’t have the sense to realize that because they were in the middle of one of their interminable elections, this one I think was a municipal election, that my appearance at this state-owned steel plant—I mean, you know the system in Yugoslavia. There were no state-owned factories to speak of; they were all run by the workers on behalf of all the other—

Q: A—

MILES: Yes, “worker self-management” they called it.

But anyhow, leaving the ideology aside, it was a state-run factory. And the head of the company was a political appointee, in fact, one of Mira Markovic’s protégées who had no previous experience which enabled him to run this steel factory. He was a very young man who had previously been manager of a shoe factory. And so I went down to the factory and was televised and photographed and I made comments with this political appointee plant manager by my side saying this steel factory seems very efficient and this material would be very useful for construction in Yugoslavia, perhaps could find some export markets abroad, and so on. I think I was careful enough in what I was saying but the timing was terrible and it was taken up by the opposition and echoed even in the United States as a change in U.S. policy which was favoring the Milosevic people at this time of the election. And so this was a big mistake which I never repeated but it was a big mistake at the time.

You didn’t have the Arkans of the world active down in Kosovo at that time. That came really only after the opening of the air war and the unleashing of real military action against the Kosovar Albanians. Prior to the war, you had the MUP itself, the internal troops, but what you didn’t have was the involvement of the Yugoslav army and that is very important for several reasons. One, it denied the Yugoslav authorities the heavy weaponry, the armor—that is to say, the tanks, the self-propelled artillery, the artillery

itself beyond mortars, and military aircraft. Milosevic would have liked to have involved the army even though it was more or less unconstitutional to involve the army against internal enemies. But the army, led by General Perisic, who has been indicted by The Hague for alleged war crimes committed during the Bosnia War, was adamantly opposed to using the army in Kosovo. Perisic, who I think is a very courageous and interesting man, became an important opposition figure to Milosevic and, until he was removed from his position on the eve of the Kosovo War, not only refused to allow the army to be used in those situations but separated himself from Milosevic politically. For example, at a time when Milosevic was locking up student demonstrators, Perisic invited a group of the demonstrators into his office to just have a chat with them to show some solidarity, and then he made a public statement about "These are the young people of the future" and so on. It was really incredibly brave and I'm sure that Milosevic was just furious over that incident. Later, as the UCK activities intensified and the MUP activities intensified as well, the army, under Perisic, did allow itself to provide backup force in Kosovo. Some small scale artillery was deployed and so on. But I do know that General Perisic was trying very hard to stay out of it and the Defense Attaché and I had many extraordinarily interesting conversations with General Perisic and with his Head of Counter-Intelligence, Colonel General Dimitrijevic over the situation. General Perisic was extraordinarily outspoken in his opposition to Milosevic's activities and to Mira Markovic; she had become something of a bête noir for the anti-Milosevic crowd. Really quite interesting conversations.

Well, because of his obvious opposition, Perisic was removed from his position as Chief of the General Staff and was replaced by an odious sycophant, General Ojdanic. General Ojdanic had no qualms about using the VJ [*Vojska Jugoslavije*], the Yugoslav Army, against the Kosovar Albanians, and as a result of the military operations carried out under his authority, he has been sentenced to 15 years imprisonment by the Hague Tribunal. So Perisic was not involved directly during the Kosovo air war but afterwards he became Deputy Prime Minister in the new government in Yugoslavia. He was later indicted and sent to The Hague on charges involving his activity during the war in Bosnia. He's been released on a temporary basis pending his actual trial. So it shows that The Hague is treating him a little bit differently than they've been treating some of the others.

Dick Holbrooke was very good in handling the MUP and the Yugoslav military leadership during the buildup to the war. He understood perfectly the distinctions and the subtleties of the power relationships between them. He never quite got involved with the SDB, the state security service. I probably was the one who had the most contact with the SDB Chief, a fellow named Stanisic, also under indictment at The Hague. Stanisic had blood on his hands; he isn't a—I'm not trying to present him as an admirable figure. Certainly, he was less admirable than General Perisic. But in his conversations with me and another member of my staff, he was extremely outspoken in expressing his opposition to Milosevic and his intense dislike for Mira Markovic. Now, it's possible that he was playing me—after all, that was his profession—but, nonetheless, these were almost treasonous conversations that I had with him. Usually there would be no note taker on his part and I wouldn't usually have a note taker. The Station Chief and I would just be there. We would generally not take notes and we'd try to recreate the conversation

afterward in order to have a better flow of ideas and information. But these conversations were just incredible, and this from the head of state security; quite interesting indeed. I don't know to what extent he was telling us what he thought we wanted to hear but I do know that after a few of these conversations, Milosevic required the head of state security to inform him each time that he was going to receive me and to call him after the meeting and give him a summary of the conversation. And then, of course, Milosevic did remove him from his position after—it was actually while I was still there and before the air war, so Milosevic clearly didn't trust him.

Q: Well, was there a point as things were developing that you became fairly convinced that the only answer really is going to be war?

MILES: I was never entirely convinced of that but I was certainly convinced that that was what Washington intended, and it was quite clear that Washington's attitude was rather bellicose toward the regime and that Dick's instructions in his dealings with Milosevic were getting increasingly limited and increasingly harsh, I'd say. And so the situation continued to worsen and intensify, and during this time Madeleine Albright herself came out and talked to Milosevic but they didn't have a dialog, it was more of a scolding that she gave him. She hardly allowed him to get a word in edgewise, so that didn't amount to a whole lot. In Dick's case, he tried to have conversations with Milosevic and he tried to work out ways in which the two sides could be separated in Kosovo while efforts were made to find a political solution. And with the help of some bright young people from SP, the policy plans people in the State Department, and from the NSC, and with the addition of yet another special envoy, in this case Ambassador Chris Hill, coming up from Macedonia, because Bill had worked closely with Milosevic during the Dayton process—so we had special envoys all over the place, and we also were able to organize the first meeting in some nine years between Dr. Rugova and a few other of the Kosovar-Albanians and Milosevic. We kept trying to find, that is to say the United States government kept trying to find ways in which some accommodation could be made between the two belligerent sides, in what now amounted to a serious civil war, to lessen the tension and provide some way to introduce some confidence building measures which might lead toward a political solution at an indefinite point in the future.

So for example, there was a Catholic lay organization out of Rome called the Community of Sant'Egidio, which had been working for years, successfully, to try to improve the situation in the Albanian-run school system down in Kosovo and to make it more legitimate. One big complaint on the part of the Albanian authorities, who were running their own independent school system, was that the graduation certificates they were issuing were not accepted by the Serbian authorities. Well, I mean, that's understandable in some ways, but having said that it was a great handicap to the graduates who would try to go for jobs or even to further their education. They would find that their certificates didn't mean anything even though they had received a fairly decent education. So the Italians were trying to find ways to improve that and to have the Serbian authorities certify the documents, which would make them legitimate for international use. And there was actually progress on that issue. We had other NGOs that were involved: the Project on Ethnic Relations out of Princeton, New Jersey, was successful in getting Serb

and Kosovar-Albanians together for discussions in a kind of a neutral location. They met down in Montenegro, as I recall. And those sessions, which went on for a day and a half or two days were actually shown on Belgrade television. This was the first time in years that such a thing had been done, where the two sides could publicly exchange their views about their grievances and how they saw things. So we encouraged this sort of positive NGO activity.

Dick and his people were very imaginative in trying to develop a mechanism for an acceptable Kosovar-Albanian police force in which people would be selected and trained and, under OSCE auspices, would then begin to provide a professional police presence in villages in Kosovo, particularly in the villages in which the Serb authorities had lost control. And that training was actually begun and several hundred policemen graduated from it.

Demarcation lines between the opposing sides were constantly being proposed and altered and adopted and drawn forward and backward and accepted and then violated; it was a very, very intensive period. I mean, I scarcely did anything else for the whole period, 1998 until the spring of 1999, except work on these issues.

Q: What kicked off—I mean, the thing that really put the fat in the fire was when all of a sudden there was this mass expulsion of Kosovars into Macedonia.

MILES: No, no, it wasn't quite that. The thing that really—I think the straw that really broke the camel's back was the Racak massacre in January 1999. Bill Walker was there right after it happened and the scenes on television and the way in which Bill addressed the media on that occasion really solidified public opinion in Western Europe and the United States. I think that was really the point when the slide toward war became almost unstoppable. During all this time, as the fighting grew more serious, when you had actual units fighting each other, the villagers began to leave their homes and move away from the scene of fighting. So you had what amounts to maybe as many as 150 to 200,000 Albanians, men, women and children, living up in the hills, in the mountains with tarpaulin over their farm wagons or lean-to shelters on the ground and cooking their meals over an open fire and drawing water from a stream and trying to live in some way with babies and the heat of summer in '98 and the cold of winter in the winter of '98, early '99, and people getting sick and not having enough doctors and medical care.

NGOs were active. KDOM and later KVM were active, our own USAID people were very busy with relief efforts, but the situation for these refugees was truly horrible. And meanwhile the agriculture in Kosovo had basically come to a halt. It was a very strange feeling to drive along in a small convoy of armored cars through areas which had been abandoned by the population and to see herds of cows that had been let loose or had broken out of their lots or their barns and had come together in natural herds of maybe 150 or 200 cows roaming across the landscape and eating the grass or the corn or the crops that were left and no people in sigh—not a soul. And occasionally you'd see a dead cow, bloated with its legs up in the air, either killed by stray dogs or shot by one of the Yugoslav MUP personnel just for sport or whatever. It was a very eerie feeling. Oddly,

when you were driving near areas of combat it was somehow more acceptable; you'd see a village that would be burning with the smoke rising, walls smashed down, empty shell casings underfoot and all, and you just felt like you were in a bad movie about World War II and somehow the violence was a "normal" part of that wartime situation. But when you were driving along through areas where the fighting had passed on and where you saw these enormous herds of animals out in the fields and no people and everything very peaceful and quiet, that was an eerie situation, let me tell you, and one I don't care to repeat.

Q: Was the solution, as far as Milosevic was concerned, evident that the Yugoslav Army should just go in and clean house?

MILES: Milosevic wanted to and some of the military leaders were perfectly willing to do that. But again, until he was removed, General Perisic was adamantly opposed to that with the exception of providing some backup for the MUP. As the MUP conducted increasingly serious operations in the summer and fall of 1998, the VJ did provide some backup but, as long as General Perisic was in charge, the VJ avoided actual combat operations.

I'd like to mention, while we're on this, the activities of Shaun Byrnes. Do you know Shaun, by chance?

Q: No.

MILES: He would be someone to interview. He's retired from the Foreign Service now; he's in Rome where his wife is still a Foreign Service officer. His father was Bob Burns at Indiana University, a rather well known historian; I studied with his father, actually. Well, Shaun—I always liked Shaun. We had known each other for a long time in, I think he was in Moscow at one point while we were there and, hell, I'd known him as a kid when I'd attend dinners and seminars out at his father's house and he'd be riding his bike around. Well, in any case, we got Shaun. Shaun had been in Yugoslavia before and we got him seconded to us from Embassy Rome and he did absolutely yeoman work; he was just incredible in working with Serb authorities and also working directly with the UCK. He would go into situations where, for example, the UCK might have taken some hostages, were holding them in a house; the house was then surrounded by MUP forces who were about to open fire, and--what to do? Now, this is not generally covered in the A-100 course. Anyhow this took a lot of telephoning back and forth to Kosovo and around Belgrade and getting agreement with everybody and so on. I'm leaving out a lot of details here, but we would sometimes be able to obtain a waiting period, a ceasefire or a waiting period during which Shaun would go in through the MUP lines and down into the UCK stronghold and talk the UCK fighters into releasing those hostages and then talk the MUP into allowing the UCK people to exfiltrate through their lines back into UCK-controlled territory. Everybody with itchy trigger fingers, of course. Just truly heroic work. Now, we got him awards for that but I don't think any award can adequately speak to the heroic action that he took on far more than one occasion. The entire Embassy team performed in an outstanding manner but Shaun and Bill Fischer, my defense

attaché, were just superb and I couldn't have done what I did in that situation without their very active involvement. I'm leaving a lot of good people out—Nick Hill, a Political Officer and Chris Hill's brother, did some excellent contact work in Kosovo, Tina Kaidanow—but I can't mention everybody.

Q: Well, wasn't it the Defense Attaché and you too sort of making the checklist of, okay, if we go to war, this is what we should do and where we should go and that sort of thing?

MILES: I wasn't doing that so much personally until just before our final closure of the Embassy, but the DCM, the Administrative Officer, the Defense Attaché and others did. I guess I don't want to go into great detail about it, but where DIA likes their defense attachés to cultivate personal relations and to count how many of this tank and how many of that tank there are—bean counters, we say—Bill Fischer and I had a more expanded view of his responsibilities. DIA likes that factual and statistical approach, but EUCOM, the European Command, and the Pentagon itself—that is, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, OSD, and the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, OJCS—they want rather more than that. And I felt they should have it and so I encouraged the Defense Attaché to go beyond the somewhat strict definition of his job as outlined to him by his bosses and to try to provide the sort of material and information and insight which EUCOM needed to wage war, and he did an excellent job of that.

Q: Were you at any particular point beginning to draw down? In other words—

MILES: Oh, three times.

Q: What?

MILES: We had a drawdown twice before we finally closed the Embassy down. Sharon got so used to going to Budapest that she actually began learning Hungarian. Yes, we had two drawdowns and then the final evacuation. We would generally go down to the hard core of the Embassy—about 19, including six Marine security guards.

Q: Who was your DCM?

MILES: Jack Zetkulic. So we spent a lot of time, our people spent a lot of time in Budapest. I always remained with the group in Belgrade and so I only went to Budapest once when we actually closed the Embassy, but everyone else pretty much spent anywhere from two weeks to a month up there on three different occasions. We were always able to go out by land with the exception of the last time out. I had cultivated a good relationship with the thug, literally thug, who was the head of customs in Yugoslavia and by basically buttering him up and showing him some respect through office calls and sending around a bottle of Scotch and that kind of a thing, we were able to execute these drawdowns as they're called, including the final evacuation, with no fuss whatsoever. People took out just about whatever they wanted to in the way of their household goods and their pets and so forth, and where we could easily have been

harassed and bothered by the customs officers, that never happened. The passage across the border was just ultra-smooth.

Q: Were there any points where you had mobs surround you?

MILES: No. There was only one occasion when, I don't even remember what it was, when a mob came down to the Embassy and threw ink bottles and things against the building. The Yugoslav police controlled that and other than that there were no such incidents. There were sometimes peaceful marches past the Embassy. We were on a major street which had a lot of other embassies on it and—

Q: Kneza Miloša?

MILES: Yes. And sometimes demonstrators, pro-government demonstrators, would use the street but only on one occasion was there any overt hostility in that way; we always felt protected and we were protected. And when we finally did close the Embassy, maybe we can talk about Yugoslavia some more later, but I'll jump ahead to the actual closing of the Embassy because it's an interesting story. We had selected Sweden as our protecting power and I had worked with the Swedish Ambassador and the Admin Officer had worked with the appropriate people in the Swedish Embassy and the DCM had been involved, and we'd spent a lot of time showing them the intricacies of our old building, how to manage the water and the heat and the cooling—plus all of our other properties in Belgrade.

Q: That was quite something. The old building had been quite badly damaged during World War II.

MILES: Yes, it was a mess. And so the Swedes were very good about this, very well prepared to handle it even though it was a major burden for them. We were going to send money down through the Swedish diplomatic pouch and they were going to pay the locally engaged staff, the FSNs, for a period of time. We didn't know how long the war would last, of course, but I think we all believed it would be relatively short. And it was a relatively short war but it took us a long time to get back to Belgrade and there's the rub.

So we informed the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry. Now, they had always refused to name a protecting power in their case because they didn't want to admit that we were actually going to be engaged in hostilities. But they didn't have any problem with our accepting Sweden; they just said, well, that's fine, we'll talk about this later if we have to, but let's hope that we don't have to. And then in the end there were lots and lots of telephone calls between me and the appropriate people in Milosevic's cabinet and also in the Foreign Ministry about this, and also with Strobe Talbott back in Washington and with Tom Pickering. Tom at that point was Under Secretary for Political Affairs so we were on the phone a lot about the actual closing of the Embassy. And when it became quite clear that we were in fact going to do that, the Navy flew in a plane, a C-9—it's the military equivalent of a DC-9—and we drove out to the airport in our armored cars early in the morning on March 24, 1999. We took the flag down from the Embassy at about 4 o'clock

in the morning. We told the Yugoslavs we'd be leaving at 6 o'clock in the morning, and this was after Dick Holbrooke had had one last negotiating session with Milosevic the evening of the 22nd. It had basically failed and so after Dick left on March 23, we shredded the few files we had left, welded shut the vault doors of certain protected rooms and handed the keys over to the Swedes.

And then at 4 o'clock in the morning of the 24th, the Marines and I took the flag down, I carried it myself, and we hauled off to the airport in a small convoy of armored cars. And we really didn't know whether the airplane would be allowed to take off or not. I mean, you can stop an airplane with a couple of four by fours, just put them in front of the wheels and that's the end of that. Or toss the same four by four into the jet engine; anybody—an eight-year-old—can stop an airplane from taking off. So we didn't really know what was going to happen but in the end there was no problem at all. There was no problem with the customs people, no problem with the immigration people; they understood what was going on and they had orders, obviously, to let us out and so we were able to fly out. And then our Embassy drivers and baggage handlers turned around and drove the armored cars back to put them inside of our garage in the lower part of the Embassy and that very same afternoon the Yugoslav authorities came and broke the locks on the garage door and hauled all those armored vehicles out. So they got, I think it was about $2 million worth of armored vehicles. I had the largest fleet of armored vehicles in Europe at that time and the Yugoslav authorities took every damned one of them.

Q: Well, let's talk about Washington first. As this was leading up to a civil war, where was the Embassy and where was, sort of, Washington? I mean, were you working off the same hymn book or was there some dispute or how did that work?

MILES: There was a feeling of inevitability about it at that point. It was clear that Holbrooke had given it every ounce of energy and imagination that he could and that the Yugoslav forces simply weren't going to back off. Now, I'm leaving out a very important and interesting part of this story which is the negotiations which had been going on in Rambouillet, France, during the first three months of 1999. Much has been written about Rambouillet but I was neither there nor consulted about it, so it would be foolish for me to talk about Rambouillet now. I'll limit myself to one comment—whoever thought up the final ultimatum to the Serbs, the ultimatum which was rejected by Milosevic's Parliament, didn't know much or didn't care much about Serb history. The Serbs have a history of rejecting ultimatums from superior powers. It's almost their national sport. When I saw the terms of that ultimatum, I knew that war was inevitable.

There was also an understanding, maybe more on the Embassy's part than on the part of Washington, that the UCK was not going to back off either. Anyhow, the pressure was on the Yugoslav government. The final ultimatum, signed by the U.S., the U.K. and the Kosovar Albanian delegations at Rambouillet, would have allowed NATO forces to go through Serb territory at will and occupy certain positions in Kosovo in order to separate the forces until a political solution could be reached. On the afternoon of the 23rd, the day before the bombing began; we were sitting in a TV room in the front office of the Embassy watching a meeting of the Federal Assembly, the Yugoslav Parliament. Serbian

President Milutinovic, who had been Yugoslav chief negotiator at Rambouillet, gave a speech, which was quite defiant, even belligerent, and in essence he rejected all of these conditions that had been laid down in the ultimatum.

Now, I have to admit these would have been difficult conditions for any sovereign state to accept but, of course, they weren't coming out of the blue; they were the culmination of a series of requests and later demands by the chief negotiating partners at Rambouillet and against the background of harsh military action by both Milosevic and his instruments of force and by the UCK. There were reports of increasing numbers of refugees and by that time refugees had begun to go across into Macedonia and some into Albania as well and many had gone into Montenegro, which was very ill equipped to take care of them. And so when we were listening to Milutinovic's speech on the television, I was giving Holbrooke a sort of line by line translation of this speech, and I said this means they have rejected our conditions and Holbrooke said, well, this means war then, we'll have to do what we have said we'll do. Tell Milosevic that I am willing to see him again but that I'm leaving at such and such a time. I think he'd be leaving about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the speech was at 3 o'clock or something like that, and, he added, I could stay later but if I don't hear from him, I'll be on that plane and out of here at 5 or 6 o'clock. Unfortunately, I don't recall the exact time. And I did pass that word on and the answer came back there was no need for a meeting, the positions of the two sides are well known. And in his last meeting with Milosevic the previous evening Holbrooke had said to Milosevic, you know what will ensue when I leave this room if these conditions are not accepted? And Milosevic said, yes, I understand. So there was no question whatsoever that Milosevic did not know what was going to happen, although it's sort of an oddity of modern times that we don't declare war anymore. You know, we never declared war against Yugoslavia and NATO never declared war; we just began bombing.

Q: Well, did you get any feel for what were the calculations that the Serbs were making? I mean, they could have hunkered down and if we tried to roust them out of the woods and out of the mountains it would have been very difficult.

MILES: Well, that happened with their aircraft. We destroyed very few aircraft and not a lot of equipment, to tell you the truth. They were pretty good about concealment. But, of course, we were not only targeting military equipment. Earlier, Holbrooke had brought General Mike "Bud" Short to Belgrade. At that time, Bud was the three-star general in charge of USAFE operations. He would later be responsible for allied operations in the air war. Holbrooke had Bud Short come to Belgrade to describe for the political and military leaders exactly what modern air war was like. I was in on those conversations and I remember them very well. Bud did describe in eloquent detail what would happen if allied fire power was unleashed against the Yugoslavs. He told not just Milosevic but the also the Yugoslav Air Force generals that their memories of air war probably dated from old films from World War II. "Let me tell you what it's like now," he said. "We have a lot of weapons, we have stealth bombers, we have precision-guided weaponry, we have cruise missiles. You can't imagine the devastation that we can cause with this modern weaponry and we will do it and we won't just hit military targets." And I don't think they quite got it, to tell the truth, despite these conversations, and they were very serious and

very sober conversations. And I can remember the head of the air defense service, I wish I could remember his name, a Yugoslav general, who sat across the table from Bud Short and listened to him, heard him out, and then said, "Well, General, I understand exactly what you're telling me but I have to do my duty and my duty is to my President and to my country and so I hear you and I have nothing more to say to you." And that general was killed, by the way, at one of his forward command posts during an air war. Sitting there and listening to that conversation was a very dramatic moment, let me tell you.

So when we did begin the air war, and of course I was gone by then, but we did hit civilian targets. We began to destroy the Yugoslav infrastructure: the electric power installations, the bridges and other such installations. We started with military targets, of course, but we quickly accelerated to strategic, civilian targets.

Q: This is tape nine, side one, with Dick Miles. Yes.

MILES: I haven't seen the statistics but my bet would be that a very large percentage of the munitions that were expended in the Kosovo air war were used against the civilian infrastructure as opposed to trying to hit military targets.

Q: We were able to put out the entire electric grid, practically.

MILES: Yes, exactly. These modern precision weapons are incredible. I've been back to Belgrade subsequently and it's truly amazing to walk down Kneza Miloša Street where the German Embassy, the Croatian Embassy, the Canadian Embassy and others, where our Embassy is, and to see at one end of the street the Ministry of Internal Affairs building totally destroyed and then at the other end of the street the Ministry of Defense building is totally destroyed while across the street the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building was not touched. I mean, it's just amazing really.

Q: Were you involved in any discussions before this happened as war became more and more apparent of just—the whole idea was to make the Milosevic regime, was to hurt them badly, and this in a way was a political analysis. I mean, was this, you know, cutting off electricity, breaking the infrastructure, were you involved at all or your Embassy involved in that planning?

MILES: Well, numerous plans had been put forward prior to the day the bombing started to separate the forces and to monitor the reduction and the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo. And as the situation deteriorated and as our demands became increasingly strident and intrusive it became clear that Milosevic was just not going to accept those demands. I feel bad about the fact that we went to war at all. It seems to me that there still was room for political discussion and for efforts to avert the war, although, admittedly, once the Rambouillet ultimatum was presented to the Serbs as a "take it or leave it" deal, it was hard to see how we could back down from our threat to go to war. But I do also firmly believe that Milosevic had every opportunity to turn away from war. The national command authorities in Washington were resolved to separate the Serb and the Kosovar Albanian forces so that the Albanian population would not be persecuted and killed, their

homes and villages destroyed; in short, Washington insisted that the Serb authorities were going to have to come to some kind of a political understanding with the Albanian population in Kosovo. And Milosevic was simply not willing to accept this. And, by the way, these increasingly stark Washington conditions were vetted and approved by the NATO allies, otherwise they wouldn't have gone to war. So it wasn't just the United States that went to war, although clearly the United States was carrying the lion's share of the burden here. But it was the entire Western community of nations, that is to say the NATO community of nations that had gone this route. Dick Holbrooke always was very good about briefing the ambassadors of the NATO member countries in Belgrade if he possibly could do it before he left town. In any event, he almost invariably would go up to NATO and would go on to Brussels and debrief at NATO as well. The Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana, and the NATO military commander or SACEUR, General Wes Clark, came down several times. And there were lots of telephone calls back and forth, including direct calls between Solana and Milosevic and between Wes Clark and Milosevic and sometimes Wes Clark and the Yugoslav generals. Sometimes I'd be involved in those and sometimes I wouldn't; sometimes I'd know about them, sometimes I wouldn't. I believe I always knew when Dick Holbrooke was doing something or involved in something, but this didn't always hold for NATO.

Q: Were we pointing out to the powers that be in Washington and NATO that, okay, if we do go to war in this thing this essentially will mean a somehow a quasi or a fully independent Kosovo?

MILES: No, and for two reasons. One, events were moving too fast for us to do that kind of analysis and the people in Washington that perhaps would have been involved in an analysis of that sort were the same people that Dick had involved in his negotiating team that he would bring out and they were pretty busy just trying to avert war. And second, our policy was and remained so until a year or so ago, that we didn't favor an independent Kosovo—that we favored an autonomous Kosovo within the confines of Yugoslav sovereignty and territorial integrity. Now, whether all the players were sincere in that, whether we believed that after warfare of the sort that we eventually saw, the situation could in fact revert to such a thing as autonomy, I don't know. My own feeling, I guess, is a little bit cynical in that regard but the issue was never carefully analyzed and I think those are the two reasons why it wasn't. I should mention by the way that two of the Embassy political officers collaborated on what we call a "Dissent Channel" message to Washington proposing and defending a change in U.S. policy toward one recognizing the goal of an independent Kosovo. I didn't agree with it but it was well written and I sent it in in this protected channel. That message won the Department's Creative Dissent Award that year.

Q: I'm looking at the time, Dick. Maybe this is a good place to stop. We'll pick it up the next time with what you are up to—the fact that you left for good, the war started, but—

MILES: There are a few more things we can go back and pick up.

Q: You know, I mean, what was happening?

MILES: Well, for example, Milan Panic, who is an interesting character and who needs to be brought out in this history, was involved and was in and out of Yugoslavia fairly often. He's an American citizen of Yugoslav background, who for a while became Prime Minister of Yugoslavia. After he left office, he had one of his pharmaceutical factories nationalized by the Milosevic government. The involvement of the Embassy in that process is interesting. And then maybe a little more on the Montenegrin situation and the attitude and actions of the Orthodox Church. There are some more things to talk about so we can tuck that in and then go on from there.

Q: Okay, great.

Today is the 12th of June, 2007. Dick, well, let's talk—again, you were in Yugoslavia from, well, was it Serbia or—?

MILES: Technically it was Serbia-Montenegro. We, especially those of us who had been in the former Yugoslavia still called it the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and that's what they called themselves, but I think that the American government called it Serbia-Montenegro while I was there, 1996 to 1999.

Q: Okay. You want to talk about, what's his name—Panic?

MILES: Panic, yes.

Q: Well, do you also want to talk a bit about what you got from the military attaché that you identified about Perisic, was it?

MILES: Perisic was the Chief of the General Staff.

Q: What was his impression?

MILES: Well, I always thought highly of Perisic, partly because he simply loathed Milosevic and made no secret about it. And if you can loathe a person even more he doubly loathed Milosevic's wife, Mira Markovic.

The Defense Attaché's view was that while Perisic may very well have loathed Milosevic, he was also a rather extreme Serb patriot and nationalist and probably did have more blood on his hands than he should have had, even as a military officer. Well, Perisic has been indicted by The Hague and so this will all come out in the eventual trial and we'll see what the Tribunal has to say.

With regard to Milan Panic; Milan is an interesting fellow. He was a former champion bicycle racer in Yugoslavia and, frankly, from no more than that plus his native wit, made his way to the United States in the 1960s and in time became a wealthy businessman in Los Angeles, the president and CEO of ICN Pharmaceuticals. Milan was always very much interested in Yugoslav affairs and I first met him when I helped to escort a small

group of League of Communists of Yugoslavia officials around the United States and out to California. This would have been about 1984, the spring of 1984, I believe. That was one wacky trip. Somehow we wound up having dinner in Milan Panic's mansion in Los Angeles. All sorts of dignitaries were there from the political, business and cultural worlds. Former Governor Jerry Brown was there, as I recall, and also several former Cabinet members.

Q: Former Governor of California.

MILES: Yes. So anyhow, I met Milan then. He was very gracious, not an arrogant person at all, quite hospitable and very interested in policy and business matters and he was interesting in his own right. I didn't meet him again until I went back to Belgrade in 1996. Milan had gone back to Yugoslavia in the early 90s and somehow got appointed as Prime Minister under Milosevic. It was a pretty dumb thing for him to do, frankly, and in the end it didn't work out. As Prime Minister he actually hired former Ambassador Jack Scanlan, under whom I had served in my second tour in Yugoslavia, as his advisor. So for a while there we had Milan Panic, an American citizen, as the Prime Minister of Milosevic's Yugoslavia and at the same time having a former U.S. ambassador on the payroll as his advisor. It was a bizarre state of affairs and I'm happy to say it ended before I got there on my third and final tour. Milan kept coming back to Yugoslavia while I was there. He had his business interests to look after and he was also very much interested in trying to develop something of a democratic opposition to Milosevic. He couldn't be very open about it because, after all, Milosevic's regime, while it wasn't a totalitarian dictatorship, was authoritarian and it certainly had its dangers for those who wanted to challenge the regime. So Milan was always a little bit careful although not careful enough for my taste. He would stay in one of the nice hotels there in Belgrade and he'd talk to people privately but then he'd also usually host a dinner or two and would invite people in for these very nice dinners and I was almost always included. Frankly, some of the dinner conversation used to set my teeth on edge. Keep in mind that Milosevic probably received transcripts of these dinner conversations along with his morning toast and coffee. Usually, I would let Milan's comments just slide by but sometimes I would openly challenge him when I thought he had gone too far in trying to describe certain events or Washington attitudes. But despite this, I enjoyed his company.

Panic had invested in several pharmaceutical plants abroad, one in Belgrade and one or two in Poland. He was looking at one in Russia but I don't know if he ever actually invested in Russia or not. The one in Belgrade was actually making quite a bit of money and then, later on, as the U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia hardened and when Milosevic probably got tired of Milan's posing and posturing with the opposition, Milosevic began to move in on that company. We got wind of it because we knew, of course, the manager of the company and we had contacts through Milan's people, including former Ambassador Scanlan. So we knew that the government was about to make these moves and I sent one of my economic officers out to the plant on the day when the goons arrived to seize the company. They were going to just throw the management people out and physically take the plant over. Well, there was quite an exchange, first at the gate when the guards didn't want to let these Milosevic thugs in. When I say thugs I don't mean

they were all hoodlum types; you know, some were what would amount to party apparatchiks, if you could call Milosevic's party a party. They were political people and they represented the government, basically. Others were simply goons, simply muscle that was to be employed if necessary. In any case, the Milosevic people finally made their way in through the locked gates. And then there was a kind of a confrontation in what amounted to the boardroom when the Milosevic people simply told the board members that they were dismissed by virtue of this or that Yugoslav law and that they should go home now, this plant now belonged to the workers and there was no further use for a board of directors. My economic officer did the best he could to make it known that this was private property owned by a U.S. citizen and therefore the U.S. government was opposed to any nationalization of the property, no matter what they called it. Of course, his comments were brushed aside. By that time Milosevic was beyond niceties. And so the officer came back to the Embassy and we sent an excellent cable back to Washington on the basis of his observations. I believe I got him an award for it because he was rather brave in the process; he could have been hurt.

I tried to talk to Milosevic myself about the seizure of the plant, but he refused to see me, given the topic. I have to say that this was unusual for Milosevic. I usually had no problem seeing him whenever I wanted to. Finally I wound up with, I believe it was the Minister of Health, who, himself, was a real goon. A Milosevic loyalist to the core. I don't remember his name, but I hope he's been indicted. He was an unpleasant fellow. I was told that I would see him because the plant produced pharmaceuticals. Now this was annoying. This was a political and legal matter and had nothing whatsoever to do with pharmaceuticals. Anyhow, I went to see him and had this bizarre conversation with the fellow and in the end he got up to leave, he had made his little speech and he went to leave and I said, "You know, I'm not done speaking yet. I sat here listening to you, this nonsense that you have been speaking, and it would only be polite if you would sit there and listen to what I have to say." To my surprise, he sat back down again. And I then made my pitch about this being the property of an American citizen and that there were due processes which needed to be followed and American laws which would come into play and ultimately sanctions which might come into play if this were proved to be a nationalization. And that made no impression on him whatsoever and so I said—"Well, you remember Proudhon, who wrote that famous phrase about property being theft. And then I said, "I guess in modern day Yugoslavia theft is property." And he got furious because they were all schooled in Marxism and Leninism and most likely knew who Proudhon was and at that point he did walk out. He said, "I'm not going to sit here and listen to this anymore" and he just got up and walked out. And that was the title of the cable I sent back to Washington on my conversation: "In Yugoslavia Theft is Property".

By the way, Milan never did get that damn property back. After the loss of the property in Belgrade he invested a little bit of money in a small pharmaceutical plant in Montenegro and he may still have that plant; I don't know. I haven't stayed in touch with him. But even the post-Milosevic government refused to give him the Belgrade plant back.

Q: Yes. Well, what was happening in Montenegro while you were there?

MILES: Well, Djukanovic had served as Prime Minister and then as President. There was a constant rivalry between him and Momir Bulatovic. They had both been protégés of Milosevic but Djukanovic had drifted away from Milosevic while Bulatovic hadn't. I'll confess that with the elections and counter-elections in Montenegro, I had a hard time keeping track of the political infighting going on down there. I did see Bulatovic from time to time, just to stay in touch, but 95 percent of my conversations in Montenegro were with Mr. Djukanovic. And I found him very intelligent, very candid, reform-minded, but also a pragmatic political realist.

We did the best we could to help him maintain semi-independence from Belgrade and that was not always easy because Belgrade, of course, was at the same time trying to bring Djukanovic under control and to make him become more loyal to Milosevic than was the case.

There was an Albanian minority in Montenegro. Montenegro is a very tiny place, as you know, and as I recall there were about 40,000 Albanians there. Some had been there for many, many years or decades, others had come over from Kosovo just to escape the tension and the pressure that was there and the IDPs were not doing too badly in contrast to those in Serbia and Kosovo. Unlike the situation in Kosovo, the Albanians in Montenegro participated in the regular structures of government. They participated in the Montenegrin school system, for example, and they paid their taxes; they had their elected city councilmen in those towns which were predominantly Albanian. And they handled the IDPs pretty well. I visited some of the refugee sites, I wouldn't call them camps exactly; many of them were living in places which had been used by the Yugoslav trade unions to house people who were going to visit the seashore and that kind of a thing, so they were living in reasonably decent accommodations.

Q: Cottages or something.

MILES: Yes. These were pretty austere accommodations but they were not anything like the way the refugees were handled in Azerbaijan where I saw people living in abandoned railway cars and in holes in the ground with boards over the top of the hole. No, these people were actually living in cabins and rooms in what would have been inexpensive tourist cabins before so they weren't doing too badly. And the U.S. government, through USAID, tried to do what it could to help the Montenegrin government cope with all this and to help them maintain their reasonably civilized policies toward the IDPs. When it became clear that we were headed toward war we began to pay even more attention to what was happening in Montenegro, and the Montenegrins were very much interested in staying close to us too because they hoped to keep the hostilities away from Montenegrin territory to the extent possible. And so, while I'm not an expert on what actually happened during the war itself, my understanding is that there was very little violence there compared to what was going on in Kosovo and in Serbia itself. So the Montenegrins played a careful game and a fairly wise one.

Now, all that business about Montenegrin independence came after I left and so there isn't much sense in me talking about it. There were public opinion polls before the

conflict. Polls were conducted in Yugoslavia all the time and even under Milosevic they were pretty accurate, actually, and so we knew pretty much what public opinion was and public opinion in Montenegro was divided on the issue of Montenegrin independence almost 50/50, with people down toward the coast desiring independence and people inland, that is to say closer to the actual border with Serbia, preferring to remain in some form of political union with Serbia itself. In the end, of course, they did become independent. I spent some time cultivating the Archbishop in Cetinje, the ancient capital of Montenegro, a capital, by the way, where they still can point out the American legation building from the balmy days of 1905-1920.

I used to call on Archbishop Amfilohije and I always found him a very wise person, something of a nationalist, a Montenegrin nationalist but interesting because the Montenegrin church technically was subordinate to the Serbian church and yet historically had always had something of an autonomous status. It was both subordinate and independent at the same time and so it was very interesting to stay in touch with the Archbishop. I always enjoyed those visits to his ancient palace in Cetinje. The electricity was usually off and so oil lamps and candles were lit. Sitting there in his dark room drinking coffee and maybe something a little stronger with the Archbishop in his robes, you had the sense of being back in the distant past.

Q: Was there any concern in Serbia proper about the fact that Montenegro is now beginning to shift and all and pretty soon Serbia is going to be a landlocked country? Did that make any difference in the long run or not?

MILES: They just weren't thinking in those terms. They were thinking more in terms of loyalty to Milosevic and the fact that Djukanovic was being insubordinate. It was more personal and they weren't really thinking in strategic terms. You remember there was the famous Belgrade-Bar railway and I think they believed as long as they had access to that railway one way or the other they wouldn't be terribly isolated. The Serbs aren't a seagoing people and access to the sea isn't part of the Serb mindset.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Djukanovic and Milosevic?

MILES: Well, they didn't like each other, that was quite clear, and the reason was Djukanovic's independence and his refusal to kowtow to Milosevic and the crowd around Milosevic. He didn't go up to Belgrade very much. I think he was brave enough. I mean, if you're in political power in that part of the world you really have to be reasonably courageous or else you really should get out of the business because you never know what's going to happen. And he had, I think, above average courage, political courage as well as physical courage, so I expect he did worry when he had to go up to Belgrade. He didn't know if he would be arrested. I don't think Milosevic and his people would have killed anyone as prominent and as popular as Djukanovic but Milosevic had Ivan Stambolić killed and Ivan was even more popular than Djukanovic was. So I'm sure that he was a little bit uneasy every time he went up there.

In the old Yugoslavia, and they kept it up in Milosevic's time, each of the republics had maintained a house, a nice villa, which they used to put their high-ranking people up when they would come to visit Belgrade and they'd also host lunches or dinners there. And the Montenegrins had a rather nice villa near the same street where Milosevic lived and where I lived. So when Djukanovic came he was able to stay in his own place surrounded by his own security people and that probably made him feel a little more secure although obviously Milosevic's people could overwhelm that crowd any time they wanted to.

But the actual contacts between the two were very slight. I may be mistaken, but frankly I don't remember Milosevic visiting Montenegro during the entire time I was in Yugoslavia. I do know that Milosevic didn't travel very much; he didn't seem to care for travel and he stayed pretty much around the Belgrade area. He had a couple of villas at his disposal but he didn't go down to visit Kosovo. He didn't go down to visit Montenegro. And Djukanovic probably didn't come to Belgrade more than two or three times during that three year period.

Q: How did Macedonia fit into the great scheme of things while you were there?

MILES: Hardly at all at that point. The only way it fitted in really was that Dick Holbrooke, who was coming out with increasing frequency as Special Envoy, tapped Chris Hill, who was then our ambassador to Macedonia, to be a kind of an alter ego to Dick in his Special Envoy role and to accompany him when he would go to Belgrade or Kosovo or Montenegro. And Chris was always very good about that, I must say. He always kept me informed of what he was up to. We had known each other before and we joked about Dick Holbrooke's particular negotiating style and because of Chris's sensitivity the relationship worked; otherwise it would have been a disaster in an ordinary situation. It's bad enough for an ambassador to have a special envoy flitting in and out, but to have, in a way, two of them, including one from a neighboring country, made for an unusual situation to put it mildly.

There was some tension between the two churches. The Macedonian church had been autocephalous or independent for years, if not decades, and the Serbian church always resented that and there were still property disputes, particularly the Serb church believing that it still legally owned some of the property down in Macedonia but the Macedonian church also believing that it owned some of the property up in Serbia. And I would listen to the various priests and bishops and archbishops and whatnot on that issue but frankly I chose never to get involved in that one. I mean, that way madness lies. And I remember once when a delegation came up from Macedonia to visit me in my office and I had a young officer sitting in to take notes and he was pretty new to the whole situation and I said, "Now, don't be too surprised when they start out in the 14th century. And, by God, they did. It was so funny I nearly had to keep myself from laughing. And you know, that meeting took about two hours going from the 14th century on forward.

There were, of course, great difficulties during and after the Kosovo War when the Yugoslav forces tried to push the Albanians out of Kosovo. Many of the Albanians fled to

Macedonia and that caused great stresses and strains between the Serbs and the Macedonians and also some strains with us as well. I mean, when the bombing started, for example, there were riots down in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia. Our Embassy was surrounded and Chris and the others had to retreat to a kind of bunker to take care of their own security. This was a dicey situation for a while, but back to your question, the actual relationship between Macedonia and Serbia during the time I was there was, I would say, normal, and neither side wanted to exacerbate any differences that might exist. There were some desultory border demarcation talks going on. There were, as I recall, seven points along the rather lengthy Serb-Macedonian border which were in dispute and those talks had been going on for quite a while involving both civilian and military people and they were—it was almost like how many angels can dance on the head of a pin? There would be like X hill, for example, and the question would be, did the boundary line refer to the top of the hill or did it refer to 50 meters on this side of the top of the hill or 50 meters on the other side of the top and in no case did any of these seven disputed points have any significance whatsoever. They just were part of the slow process of demarcating border lines when they are not very firmly nailed down in documents. No one was getting terribly excited about it.

Q: Were there any, particularly border problems I'm thinking of, of Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria? Was anything happening around them?

MILES: No, no. None at all really. In the past there had been some Bulgarian pretensions on Macedonian territory. It goes back to the pre-World War I period.

Q: Yes, 1912 sort of.

MILES: Yes. And of course Bulgaria, which was an ally with the axis powers, occupied part of Macedonia during the war and there was still some resentment over that. And I remember when I used to follow this business back in the days when Tito was alive, it was always interesting to see how every once in a while someone would seem to say, it's time to crank this up again, and then you'd have some "popular protest" over the fact that this little point in the territory was not properly demarcated, or that Bulgarian children in a border village on the Yugoslav side were allegedly deprived of the right to speak their language or vice versa, you know, little things of that sort. But even when I followed it in minute detail at that time, I always felt that this was pretty silly stuff. And during the period, '96 to '99 when I was there, these issues were totally insignificant. I think everyone realized that there were a lot bigger fish to fry than those silly disputes.

And interestingly enough, when I went to Bulgaria after Yugoslavia, the former issues with Macedonia which used to occupy a lot of people's time had just faded away. The two sides had simply decided that they had more interest in working together to try to resolve some common problems of pollution and smuggling and border crossings and so on than they did trying to exacerbate these almost imaginary issues.

Q: Did Danube traffic raise any issues while you were there?

MILES: I don't recall any specific issues, no. There had been issues, you remember, right after World War II when the Soviet Union, which controlled Danube traffic at that time, tried to install a rather rigid regime on the Danube. But no, I think there was fairly open traffic down the Danube and we used to get the river cruise ships that would come in from Vienna on their way somewhere down river, relatively small boats but carrying maybe 100 passengers, and if I had time I'd go out and give the passengers a briefing. There were a lot of Americans on these ships and I liked to talk to them. And they always got a kick out of it. I always liked being onboard any ship, even a small river boat, any kind of a ship for me is a fun thing. And there was, of course, the constant barge traffic up and down the Danube. Belgrade was actually a reasonably bustling port in terms of river traffic. And there didn't seem to be any specific problems over the Djerdap Dam. You remember Djerdap, a huge hydroelectric project there where they shared the power between Romania and Yugoslavia; that seemed to work pretty well, no particular problems.

Q: Well, as you—you left there—?

MILES: I left on the day the bombing started. March 24, 1999.

Q: Well, I may have asked this before but as you moved up to that point were you kind of walking around town and saying we should get this place and not that? And you know, in a way, you know, a horrible thing picking out targets and that sort of thing.

MILES: No, we didn't get into the targeting business. I deliberately stayed out of it, quite frankly, and I don't want to talk out of school—this is all unclassified, these sessions that we're having, they're unclassified—but the Defense Attaché Office did spend some time looking at communications links. In modern warfare a lot depends on communication nodes and lines of communication and so, again without getting into classified material or anything, I think it's safe to say that our defense attaché people and other people in our Embassy did spend some time on those issues.

Q: I can remember reports, and these were newspaper accounts of when the bombing was over and the agreement to allow NATO troops into Kosovo came about and the Yugoslav army was pulling out and supposedly we had been going after them but at least according to reports saying that sort of—it seemed to be that basically the Yugoslav army hadn't suffered very much from the bombing. It was really the attack on Belgrade and the communication centers that—

MILES: Yes, I gathered that's so. And the big bridge was knocked down in Novi Sad and there was a lot of infrastructure damage in Pancevo, a small industrial town near Belgrade. Yes, I think that's safe to say. The Yugoslavs had a very professional military and, in fact, one which we had helped to build and to supply. So yes, they had a good military and they knew how to conceal their deployments very well.

Now, in the earlier diplomatic and security efforts that were made to defuse the situation, there was an agreement in which Milosevic agreed to reduce the forces that were in

Kosovo to a certain limit and also to limit the weaponry. So there would be X number of troops, there would be Y number of armored personnel carriers, there would be no weapons of a caliber above 17.5 mm, for example, and so on. And at that time of the withdrawal, I sent some of our officers down to the administrative border between Kosovo and Serbia and we actually counted trucks that went by. We knew approximately how many soldiers should be in a truck. Sometimes they would be open trucks, sometimes closed trucks with a tarp over it so there was a bit of guesswork there but it was pretty accurate guesswork. And so for a couple of weeks there day and night we had someone actually sitting there counting to be sure that Milosevic was complying with the agreements that we had reached with him. In the end, that agreement, like all the other agreements, was not good enough and the attacks continued on the part of the UCK and the Yugoslavs began infiltrating men and equipment back in. This was before the outbreak of the war.

Q: Could you describe sort of the last days of your mission there?

MILES: Well yes, and it's interesting because I was the first chief of mission in Europe to go to war since 1941. You know, it happens in other countries, in Asia, in Africa, Central America, South America, but it's unique for our ambassadors in Europe. And so the European bureau was not 100 percent sure how to handle all this and neither was I but I had read about these things. I knew pretty well what had happened to our diplomatic establishments and to our diplomats when we went to war with Germany and Japan, and so mentally I was actually prepared that the hard core personnel in the Embassy—and I'll get to that in a minute—might be interned in the event of war and that it might be a period of time before we would be exchanged. In the end that didn't take place and we were allowed out just before hostilities began.

We actually drew the Embassy staff down, ordered all of the dependents out and reduced the number of personnel to all but the absolutely necessary personnel twice before we finally closed the mission. So we got pretty good at carrying out these withdrawals and actually the State Department later used our experience in their planning for evacuations because we'd really gotten it polished up pretty well. I had a very good Administrative Officer and with all of our efforts I think we did a good job. And the State Department even did a videotape: they interviewed my wife Sharon, among others, about the evacuation experience and how they went about it. The State Department agreed that, in contrast to its usual practice of ordering everyone back to America, they would just have us go up to Budapest, which was only a few hours away by car, and that meant people could take along pets and a lot of junk for the children. And the Yugoslav authorities never gave us any fuss about that, by the way, even though we did it three times.

Q: You were saying you learned things like—

MILES: Yes, like it's better to have, say, three or four separate columns of cars going out, each with a designated head and tail and with radio contact, than to have one big, very long column. The problem with one big, long column is that if you have some child that gets car sick or has to pee, you must stop maybe 100 cars and trucks, where if you have a

column of maybe 15 or 20 cars, you're only going to stop that many. And another thing: we learned it was important for morale purposes to take pets out, which is contrary to Department and U.S. Government policy but, again, because we assumed, in all except the last case, that we would be able to come back to our houses and apartments in Belgrade, we decided that we would take these pets out. The hotel in Budapest was very good about accommodating us and having the pets along was an enormous morale booster for both the children and for the adults as well. And even in the last evacuation, people took their pets out to Budapest, but, of course, they then had to make the necessary arrangements to get them to the States.

Q: Oh God, yes.

MILES: It was very important, really. Some people even carried out goldfish. They drove all the way to Budapest with a bowl of goldfish on their laps. But it was important for morale.

Q: Yes.

MILES: I was always one of the people that stayed behind in Belgrade but my DCM sometimes would go out and I'd alternate sending the DCM or the Admin Officer out, depending on how the situation was. And they learned that it was very important to try to set up some semblance of schooling so that they didn't have children developing cabin fever and driving themselves and the adults out of their minds in these relatively small hotel rooms. Not only did they organize a day school for the children, they also published a small newsletter to keep each other informed and which they sent back to the Embassy in Belgrade—so there was a sense of connection between the spouses and dependents with the folks back at the Embassy. And they organized outings and excursions. There were plenty of cars and vans available so they'd form a caravan and go visit the Herend Porcelain Factory or whatever; there are lots of things to do in Hungary and the Hungarians were very hospitable and Embassy Budapest was just excellent, I must say. Very accommodating.

I'll jump ahead a little bit, but when we finally closed the Embassy and all of us wound up in Budapest, the Department decided to keep us all, men, women and children, dogs, cats and goldfish, in Budapest for about a month. It must have cost them an absolute fortune. And so we formed a kind of an Embassy in Exile and even sent a few cables out; the Embassy in Budapest was kind enough to let us do that. We continued to put out a little newsletter and we delivered it by hand to everyone's hotel room. And we sat in on Embassy Budapest's staff meetings and we took over a fairly good size hunk of the Embassy—they simply cleared out some of the space in the Chancery and turned it over to us. Of course, we didn't try to do everything that an embassy does. Our public affairs people weren't terribly busy there and so on, but the political and economic people, the defense attaché people and others tried the best they could to make their contribution to evaluating what was going on and trying to predict what Milosevic was likely to do so it was really quite interesting. The Communications Section in the Embassy in Budapest both liked us and hated us. As I recall we tripled their cable load because of the incoming

and the outgoing cable traffic and it was really exciting. I mean, up to that point, frankly not a whole lot of activity had been going on in Budapest and so the communicators who like to read all this stuff were a little bit bored but they weren't bored after we landed, I must say. They got a kick out of that. But again, just to repeat, Embassy Budapest was very accommodating.

One aspect of the closure of the Embassy that was particularly painful was leaving behind our FSN colleagues—some of them had been working at the Embassy for decades. Thanks to the efforts of the head of our Consular Section, Gil Sperling, we were able to get refugee status for any of our FSNs who wanted to relocate to the U.S. My wife Sharon, who'd been working for IOM in Belgrade, led a meeting with the FSNs who were with us in Budapest to give some advice on the pros and cons of moving to the U.S. as refugees and to answer questions about the process. A number of our Yugoslav employees did take advantage of this offer.

Let me return to a subject I started some time back. I said earlier in my comments how we had asked the Swedish Embassy to take care of our interests and they agreed and we had never been able to get the Yugoslav foreign ministry to say which protecting power that they would like and so on. The day before we were going to leave we turned the keys over to the Swedish Embassy. They had been briefed on where our properties were, how to turn the heat and the water off and on, and we left the next morning. And at that point the Yugoslavs in America, I don't remember if this was done in Washington through the Embassy or through the UN mission in New York, asked if they could have China as their protecting power and the State Department in Washington said, "No, you can't." And they said, "Well, in that case, you can't have Sweden either." And I won't bore the listeners with the whole story of the back and forth on this; a lot of efforts were made to try to get Switzerland to do it for both of us, to get the Swedes to do Yugoslavia as well as to do America, and so on. And in the end, the Yugoslavs simply were playing hardball and they said, "We want China and if we can't have China then you're not going to have anybody." And so we didn't. What we learned out of that was that you've got to be really careful when you leave your building like that, because that situation went on through the winter of 1999. There was no heat in the building and the water which was on in March froze in December. So when we finally went back into the building, many of those old cast iron pipes had cracked and the water was still running. It was like a jungle in some of those stairwells and walls where whole sections of the wall had rotted loose and so forth. It was really awful.

Q: Why China?

MILES: Why did they want China?

Q: Yes.

MILES: I don't know for sure. One guess is, and it's only a guess, is that Mira Markovic believed she had a special relationship with the Chinese leadership and an almost mystic relationship with the Chinese people. She visited back and forth a lot. For whatever

reason of their own, the Chinese were doing things like translating her vapid books into Chinese and circulating them. It was all pretty much bullshit, I'm sure, but that was—I think that was why they asked for China.

Q: Why did the State Department oppose it?

MILES: I asked Tom Pickering that when I got back to Washington. By then he was Under Secretary for Political Affairs. The only answer I got was that the U.S.-Chinese relationship was overburdened as it was. You remember, this was about the time when there was an incident with the Chinese. A U.S. military plane had landed in Chinese territory and the crew had been detained. It may have been something like that although it was an odd response. As far as I know, a requesting nation almost always gets its choice of a protecting power.

Well, the end result was a very awkward situation which could have become very difficult. You remember, we had a couple of soldiers captured at one point. Jesse Jackson went off to negotiate their release—all in the absence of any American diplomatic presence—and we had properties there in Yugoslavia and, finally, we were trying to pay our Foreign Service nationals. In fact the Swedes, bless their heart, continued to pay them. We gave money to the Swedish foreign ministry in Stockholm, they put the cash in their diplomatic bags and hauled it down to Belgrade once a month or so and they would call in, not every FSN, but about one out of every 15 or 20. They had worked out a plan, and these few local employees would receive the salaries for the others and would then go and distribute the money around town. We kept up the payments to all the FSNs in that way and then about October or November we let them know that this was going on longer than we thought it would and that we simply couldn't justify paying everybody a full salary forever and so starting on December 31 we would cut it back to a handful of employees. We wished the others well and we said that we would see where we were when relations were resumed but meanwhile the salaries would stop for most people at the end of the year.

Q: When did we go back in?

MILES: You know, I don't recall. I've been sitting here trying to remember, but as I recall it was about a year after we left. I think it was in the summer of 2000.

By the way, here's a little footnote. I had helped the Marines lower the flag from the Embassy on the day we left and I kept it with me. And when I went back to Washington I told the powers that be that I had the flag, would they like to have; I thought, well, you know, for historical reasons or whatever. And there was no interest in it whatsoever. It was the damnedest thing. So I kept that flag myself and I took it with me to Bulgaria when I went to Sofia. So, when Bill Montgomery and his people went back in to Belgrade to reopen the Embassy I sent him an e-mail and said, "Bill, I've got the flag I took down. If you'd like to raise it again, I'll be glad to send it over to you." And he was very gracious. He said, "Why don't you bring it over and we'll raise it together?" So

that's what we did. But I was frankly appalled at the attitude of the Seventh Floor in the State Department.

I never met Madeleine Albright when I came back. Now, you'd think that the Secretary of State would want to meet the Chief of Mission from the Embassy in a country with which we'd just gone to war. But apparently not.

Q: Well, tell me. One of the things that you might say almost spurs some of this oral history that I've been doing is the lack of interest in what happened on behalf of the powers that be.

MILES: Yes, they don't look back.

Q: Did anybody say, "While you're here, what did you learn?" I mean, was there much in the way of, I'd say, debriefing of you?

MILES: There was a minimal amount of interest on the part of the State Department. There was considerable interest at the Agency and I went out there a couple of times and there was also some interest over at the NSC and I attended a couple of sessions at the NSC. But at that stage of the game with the war actually going on, it's understandable that they weren't interested in what had happened or what had gone wrong. They were interested in the present moment—how do we get Milosevic to do what we want him to do? It's understandable. I mean, here we are waging a war. We don't want to keep waging a war which is going to cost people's lives and is very expensive as well. So I understand that but what I don't understand is the failure to understand the symbolic nature of our arrival back in Washington. I know that the Seventh Floor principals had other things to do and I don't want to sound like a whiner and complainer but some kind of welcome for our group would have been nice. I saw Tom Pickering when I got back, but frankly, I think I saw him because I knew him, not because of any great Seventh Floor interest in the Embassy's involvement in the Kosovo situation. In retrospect, I think I should have tried to organize some kind of a welcoming or recognition ceremony for the Embassy staff still in the Washington area. I imagine the Secretary would have come and some of the other principals, but, to my regret, this idea just didn't occur to me at the time.

Q: Well, how were the—before we get to you—how was your staff treated, you know, after it looked like it was going to be war and they have to go somewhere?

MILES: The European Bureau was top notch in that sense and they were very good to keep us the way they did in Budapest during all those drawdowns and the final closure of the Embassy; very good indeed. And then when we left Budapest and began to split up, some already had ongoing assignments. I had an ongoing assignment; I knew before the war started that I was going to be nominated to be Ambassador to Bulgaria. Some others were nearing the end of their tour. Those who were in mid-tour had to talk to their counselors and some really hoped that they could do some interim work until the war ended and then go back into Yugoslavia when we reopened the Embassy. But the Department, rightly, felt that they just didn't know when this would be possible and they

couldn't have people just sitting around twiddling their thumbs for that indefinite period of time and so they really needed to reassign people. I think they did the best they could to accommodate people. There was lots of counseling; there were several sessions in which the people who were still in the Washington were able to meet together. I always attended those meetings.

One thing I'm sure you realize is that an Embassy team is made up of many disparate parts—you have the State Department people, you have the Marine guards, you have the Defense Attachés Office, you have USAID and so on. So while you might have a fairly tightly knit team in Belgrade, for example, and even, after evacuation, in Budapest, that team begins to dissolve the minute everyone gets on the plane to the States.

In this context, we did an interesting thing with the mail. All our mail, of course, was earmarked for Belgrade and when we closed the Embassy, all the mail was just held at the Department's mail facility out at Dulles Airport. Well, it was just sitting out there, piling up, actually. No one was making any effort to redistribute it. Admittedly this wasn't going to be an easy task because now the recipients had new addresses all over the United States. Nonetheless, we weren't at all happy with the way the Department mail facility was handling the mail. It just seemed like it wasn't being done well. People were getting dunning notices for unpaid bills—or, worse yet, not getting them. After discussing this at one of our periodic meetings in the Department, we decided to arrange a set time when a few volunteers could go out to Dulles and sort the Belgrade mail ourselves. Now the Department's mail facility out at Dulles Airport is a strange place. I don't know if you've ever been out there, but it's a huge windowless building in the middle of several other huge windowless buildings and it looks like you might imagine the mythical facilities at Roswell, New Mexico, to look like.

It's quite a place. All the mail that goes to all the Foreign Service posts in the entire world flows in there day and night and flows out day and night. And so we learned how to get our own mail. They were very accommodating, and about once a week we just took over a little corner of the building and we'd sort our mail out according to section and then people from those sections were expected to keep track of where people were and to deliver it to them one way or the other, either in the Foreign Service lounge or sending it over to the Pentagon or USAID or whatever. I mean, you can imagine the difficulties. We had people from the Marine security guard battalion out at Quantico. We had Department of Agriculture people. They all had to get their mail somehow. So that's why the State Department's service just wasn't capable of doing that; it would require more intensive effort and information than they had or cared to obtain. And so our people did it—including Sharon and our son Richard—and actually it was kind of a morale boost to do it ourselves. I complained to the Under Secretary for Management about this. I said, you can't necessarily expect that other evacuees are going to be able to do it the way we did it, where we were willing to pitch in and go out and do it ourselves; you really need to get a handle on this. Evacuations happen all the time, unfortunately. I don't know if the Department ever did get on top of this problem. I hope so.

Q: Well then, how did your—you already had received an appointment to Bulgaria.

MILES: Right.

Q: How did that come about?

MILES: Do you mind if I throw in one more story from Belgrade? It's a nice story and I often tell it to young people when I try to describe those difficult days. We had a Serb cat, Max. Like most Serbs, he was pretty tough and this served him in good stead as you will see. Before we left Belgrade I knew I had the ongoing assignment to neighboring Bulgaria and so, rather than carry Max all the way back to America and then back to the Balkans again, I asked the housekeeper if she would look after the cat. We left the cat cage, lots of cat food, money and so on and we said, look, if the situation gets bad, just take Max back to your village and we'll pick him up when the fighting is over and we are in Bulgaria. Well, you can imagine what happened. The Tomahawk missiles came screaming in to Belgrade--keep in mind. Milosevic lived on our street and his house was targeted—and the housekeeper took off immediately—sans cat. Happily she left him outdoors. If he had been left indoors, he would have starved to death. Well, after a while we heard about this somehow and we assumed the cat was dead.

Then one day, after the fighting had stopped but before we had resumed diplomatic relations with Belgrade, a friend of mine, Marko Nicovic, who had been head of the Belgrade city police and was the Yugoslav representative to the World Karate Federation, called me in Sofia and asked how he could get an American visa. He wanted to attend a meeting of the WKF in Florida. So I told him how he had to go to Budapest to get the visa and that I would send the Embassy there a message on his behalf. Then I said, I need a favor. Could you go by the American Ambassador's Residence and ask the guards there if they have seen my cat? Well, he called back not an hour later and said, "Dick, I have your cat!" Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather. It seems that the cat had survived somehow. Eating mice and birds I guess in the rather large grounds of the Residence and, according to Marko, the guards had been giving him bites of their sandwiches and so on. Anyhow, Marko gave him a bath, bought him a toy and one of the FSNs who used to work with our security people got him from Marko and brought him to me in Sofia. The cat was very skinny and whenever he heard thunder or a loud noise he would dive under the nearest piece of furniture, but he was alive and well and we still have him. He's a great cat.

OK, now back to Bulgaria.

You know, I don't recall exactly how it came about. I was just simply asked, I guess because I had done a reasonably good job in this awful situation in Yugoslavia and I was asked if I'd be willing to go to Bulgaria. Of course, I said that I would be happy to go to Bulgaria. It's a delightful place and one where I had been before and felt comfortable, and the language is a Slavic language that is similar to Serbian and Russian and so I said, sure, I would be glad to go. But I don't recall exactly how it came up; I don't recall any controversy about it whatsoever. I don't think there was any serious competition for the job. I think they wanted to give it to me and they did.

Q: What was your hearing like?

MILES: All the senators wanted to talk about was Yugoslavia. They asked very few questions about Bulgaria.

It was non-controversial appointment; our relations with Bulgaria were good. Bulgaria had its problems, but there been a recent change of government in Bulgaria and the new people were dedicated to trying to overcome those problems and so the senators, after a few desultory questions about Bulgaria and our relationship with Bulgaria, basically just wanted to talk to me about Yugoslavia. And I was better able to do that than anybody in the room, so that was no problem.

Q: What was your—well, you were Ambassador to Bulgaria from when to when?

MILES: From ’99 until 2002.

Q: What was the situation in Bulgaria in ’99 when you went out there?

MILES: They had a bad patch after independence, several bad patches, actually. I won’t try to recount all the history of modern Bulgaria—it’s not necessary—but Bulgaria had held democratic elections and there had been several different governments. Frankly, the Democrats hadn’t handled their situation very well and the Socialists had returned to power. They handled things even less well than the Democrats had. There was a great increase in criminal activity and Mafia-type activity. Musclemen were driving around in big SUVs in the downtown streets, machine guns openly carried, weapons all over the place, gunfire, corruption. People were just getting fed up and crowds actually gathered outside the parliament building—this would have been probably about 1998—and they forced the parliamentary deputies to flee the building. People were extremely unhappy with the fact that the government was floundering and unable to deal with the issues of crime and corruption and the poor state of the economy. There had been an election shortly before I arrived in which a right-center government took over. This was a very pro-Western government which was interested in NATO membership, interested in improving its relationship with the EU and interested in working with the United States and other Western countries. That was the Stoyanov Government, Petar Stoyanov. He was the President and Ivan Kostov was the Prime Minister, both very competent people, democratically inclined, young, and reasonably vigorous. And so everyone simply believed that Bulgaria was finally beginning to lift itself up, kind of shaking its head and getting on with the business of running the country.

So for me, coming out of Milosevic’s Yugoslavia, Bulgaria was like a bath of warm water. It was very comfortable; there were virtually no crises, virtually no issues hindering the development of U.S.-Bulgaria relations. Our relationship was such that we could talk easily and rationally about the few problems we did have. And there were problems. We wanted the Bulgarian government to proceed faster on some corruption issues and on issues of trafficking. Bulgaria was a serious trafficking country, both for

Bulgarian women being trafficked out but also as a transit country. Some illicit narcotics were transiting the country. Criminal elements in Bulgaria were producing large quantities of extremely good, counterfeit American currency and also illegal copies of computer software, CDs and DVDs. The large Bulgarian arms industry was not above engaging in some shady arms deals. There were some nuclear power plants up in the Danube River that the Europeans had great difficulties with because some of the units were Chernobyl-type units. They didn't have a protective dome over them and that's a no-no for the European Union—and should be for anybody—and so there was always a lot of pressure from the EU for them either to close those units down or put domes over them. While we had a generic interest in that, our real interest was in trying to help major American companies gain contracts to help the Bulgarians carry out modernization programs for the reactors.

Now, I visited those reactors several times and I had also visited Russian reactors. These were Russian-designed reactors so I had had the experience of visiting the same design reactors in both Russia and in Bulgaria and they were far, far better maintained in Bulgaria than they were in Russia. Of course, I'm not a nuclear physicist, but in Bulgaria the floors at the site were so clean you could eat off of them. Painted surfaces were covered with clean, high gloss enamel. The brass work was polished and shining and the floors were swept, mopped and polished. The engineers looked like they knew what they were doing and the instrumentation appeared to me, as a layman, to be working properly. The engineers and technicians were paying attention to the dials and gauges; they weren't dozing at their desk with a half-lit cigarette in the ashtray.

There were some other smaller American business investments that were running into difficulties with Mafia-type elements. The Bulgarian government hadn't succeeded in eliminating all of them from business activity and so, with all these issues, we always had something to talk about with the Bulgarians.

We had made no commitment to Bulgaria about NATO membership and, in fact, when I first arrived in Bulgaria, I was skeptical that the Bulgarians, including the Bulgarian military, were ready to join NATO. Over time, as I got to know the government people—and the opposition—and also the Bulgarian military leadership better, I changed my mind. One organization had a big influence on me. The Atlantic Club, a very active NGO run by Solomon "Mony" Passy, did a great deal to swing public opinion around to support for NATO membership. Passy mercilessly organized the ambassadors from the NATO countries to speak about NATO at colleges and universities and in public meetings all around Bulgaria and I did my share of that as well. Passy was really an enthusiastic fellow with great organizational talent. He was instrumental in organizing the very successful public event in Sofia for President Clinton in 2002. I've seen my share of such presidential public events and that one in Sofia was one of the best.

Because we experienced no crises during our time in Bulgaria, and because I had one and then another excellent DCM, I was free for the first time in 10 years or more to just travel around the country and so Sharon and I visited just about every town and village in Bulgaria, not to mention factories, farms and national parks. Chris Dell was DCM when I

arrived. Among his other achievements, he was absolutely instrumental in organizing the Clinton visit. He was replaced by Rod Moore about whom more later. Both of these fellows went on to be ambassadors several times over.

The Department had somehow gotten the permission of Congress to purchase a large number of armored BMW 7 Series cars for our ambassadors. I had a brand new one in Bulgaria and I have to say, that was the best armored car I have ever used. I had two excellent drivers and I wore them both out. One of my drivers told me that I had traveled around more in the three years I was there than the three previous ambassadors put together, but it was because of the times, you know. The times had changed and it was possible to do it and it was a fun thing to do and so I did that.

The one really serious issue we had, which was a tricky one, was getting the Bulgarian government to destroy their SS-23 theater range missiles. They were well maintained, combat ready, they had limited range, about 500 kilometers, but they were very accurate and deadly enough and, from Bulgaria, they could strike Istanbul or Budapest. NATO membership required that those missiles be destroyed and, boy, the Bulgarian military did not want to give them up. They took great pride in them. And not just the military. Having those missiles was a source of pride for a great many Bulgarians.

Q: The Bulgarian army.

MILES: The Bulgarian generals knew they had to do it but they just wanted to put that moment off as long as they possibly could, preferably until after they had retired. They just didn't want to do it. But in the end they did agree to do it and it took a lot of discussions and conversations in order to bring that about, but always the conversations were amicable and there was no enmity or anything like that and we never got the impression, for example, that the Russians were egging the Bulgarian military on to somehow keep the missiles as a destabilizing element or whatever. It just was a matter of Bulgarian military pride and national pride and in the end they agreed they would dismantle those missiles and in the end they were dismantled.

But otherwise, my responsibilities in Bulgaria were very normal—advancing U.S. interests, observing Bulgarian economic development and keeping an eye on the political changes within the country. A dramatic change of government did occur while I was there. The economy was lagging and people had become dissatisfied at the lack of progress on this and also on the corruption issue and so in a rather odd move, Simeon, the boy king, who had been forced out of Bulgaria in 1946, returned to Bulgaria and was appointed Prime Minister by the new parliament. He had lived most of his life in Spain with the exception of attending and graduating from school at Valley Forge Military Academy of all things.

Q: Where did he go to school?

MILES: Valley Forge Military Academy, can you believe it? I mean, under a pseudonym, but that's where he was.

Well anyhow, he wound up in Spain married to a Spanish noblewoman and became a reasonably successful businessman in Spain. He was persuaded by a group of young educated Bulgarians, many of them living abroad, to come back to Bulgaria and to be a figurehead, he thought, of a political movement which would try to go faster on the various reform fronts than the existing government had done. It was one of those odd times in history when one progressive government is replaced by a more progressive government. In my experience, this doesn't happen very often. And this whole process developed very rapidly. It must have been about 2001; I don't recall the timing exactly, but the King basically came back and threw his hat in the ring in April of that year. The elections were held in the early summer of that year and his party swept the election and Simeon became Prime Minister. That was really an amazing thing. I had met Simeon informally during one of his previous visits to Bulgaria and we had a friendly, but I wouldn't say close, relationship during the rest of my tour in Bulgaria. He was a real gentleman, perhaps one of the last in Europe. Subsequent political events proved somewhat ironic. Georgi Parvanov won the presidential election in November of that year. Parvanov was head of the Socialist Party—basically the old Communist Party but renamed. He wasn't an ideologue and had not had any problem recasting himself as a democratic reformer. He was in favor of NATO membership. He was prepared to scrap the SS-23 missiles, and so on. But still, to have the former King who had been exiled by the Communist leaders of Bulgaria return as Prime Minister while the leader of the Socialist Party, the former Communist Party, promptly won an open election as President was pretty ironic. I always felt they were somewhat miscast. It's only my opinion but I thought Simeon would have been better suited for the role of President while Parvanov would have made a better Prime Minister.

The way the young people themselves prevailed on the King to come back also had its ironic moment. The previous government, the Stoyanov-Kostov government, was a progressive government and one of the things which they had done was to invite back, at government expense, many of the young Bulgarians who had been educated abroad and who were still living abroad in London, Geneva and New York as businessmen, financiers or working in the stock market or whatever to come back for a week-long retreat in Bulgaria. The government leaders met with them and they discussed what was going on in Bulgaria and the government people tried to encourage these young people to keep up their ties and to help bring foreign investment to Bulgaria. I thought it was an excellent idea.

Well, it worked too well. These young people were inspired by the conversations that they had while they were in Bulgaria and they wrote up a kind of a manifesto which they presented to Stoyanov and Kostov for greater action on this and that. To make a long story short, the government kind of blew them off in a polite way, saying something like, well, we're already doing all these things and thank you very much and don't call us, we'll call you. The result of that was that some of these young people got together through the internet and said, the hell with this nonsense, let's do something about it. And that's when they got the idea of bringing the King back and organizing themselves as a reform-minded political movement and, by golly, the next thing you know these same

young people were sitting in the ministers' chairs and running the government. I imagine they were as surprised by their success as anybody.

Q: It really shows that the whole sort of internet process—well, what has happened is that you've got a way, an international way for people of like minds and like nationalities to get together and really creating a force.

MILES: The internet is just not the same as calling somebody up on the phone or writing somebody a letter. You might send two or three copies of that letter around, but you're not going to send it to 25 people. However you can quickly do an e-mail message and send it to 25 people and these 25 people will write you back and forward all this on to their friends. The internet is an amazing thing, it's a new phenomenon. It's as though every person had a printing press. Well, in Bulgaria, it resulted in the change of government and, happily, a change which did not at all reverse the positive achievements of the previous government.

Q: Well, each one learns a lesson.

MILES: Yes. In Bulgaria it worked out for a while. In Bulgaria there were honest elections and they really did try harder for some time.

Q: Did you get any feel for relations with particularly Romania and Turkey?

MILES: You know, the last one is interesting and I'll get to that but with the Romanians—you know the Danube River may as well be 1000 miles wide. There is really virtually no interest or contact from one country to the other.

Q: And there isn't much in the way of bridges over there either.

MILES: There's only one bridge at the moment but the Bulgarians with European financing are going to build another one at Vidin, near where the old Roman bridge was. There's an existing bridge at Ruse, further east on the Bulgarian side of the river. There's a Stalin era bridge down there which spans the Danube and it's quite a nice, big bridge.

I remember once, it was kind of funny, I had worked for Senator Hollings before and we would stay in touch through periodic telephone conversations and he called me once in my car and I happened to be right in the middle of that bridge headed over to the Romanian side, and he said, "Well, Richard, where are you right now?" And I said, "Senator, I'm not really sure where I am at the moment. I'm between countries." I was absolutely in mid-air over the middle of the Danube River.

By the way, I said I had all this spare time in Bulgaria, first time almost in my career that I did, and there were lots of interesting things to do there. Bulgaria had experienced many different periods of history: what they call the Thracian civilization, which was rather like Greek civilization in a sense, and lots of really wonderful gold and silver objects to be looked at and so forth. And then there was a Roman period, the territory on the south side

of the Danube River was part of the Roman Empire, actually, and then the Byzantine period, followed by the Ottoman Empire and we used to love to go around to these various sites, ancient ruins, monasteries or whatever and I remember one fascinating archaeological site in Svishtov up on the Danube River a little bit to the west of Ruse, which had been the site of a Roman legion encampment for several hundred years. From the first century to the fourth century as I recall. The site was home to the First Italian Legion—*"Legio prima Italica"*—has a ring to it, doesn't it? It had been called *Novae*, New Town, I guess you'd say, and the site of the encampment was absolutely fascinating. Every summer a Polish archeological team came to help the Bulgarians explore the site. On the day we visited, they had dug out some of the stone foundations of the encampment. When I say encampment, I mean a permanent camp or base for the legion. It had been a fortified military town basically. The archeologists had done some absolutely amazing things and one thing they had done, and they had actually recreated it on the computer, was to discover the hospital which the legionnaires had used and really that hospital in its way was almost as good as some of the modern hospitals which we saw in Bulgaria at that time. It was just incredible the way the Romans had done that right on the Danube River. You could come in by boat and you'd be right in the camp and then everything else was there, all made of stone. While we were there, they actually took out of the ground one of the really big ceramic tiles that had been used to line part of the baths where the soldiers had gone to have their daily bath and this large tile, maybe a meter high and over half a meter wide, was still stamped with *"Leg. I. It.",* the First Italian Legion. A chill went down my spine when I saw that; it was like it had just been baked and put in place yesterday. Absolutely amazing; been there for almost 2000 years. Foreign Service life—can't beat it.

Q: Was there—you mentioned the trafficking of women—

MILES: A big problem then.

Q: I was hearing, I think Bulgaria was supposedly one of the sources, the Ukraine and—

MILES: Yes, it is.

Q: But why was this happening? Was Bulgaria unable to sort of offer a decent life for young women?

MILES: Right. There wasn't—the economic situation wasn't sufficiently developed to provide full employment and so conditions were quite difficult. If you had a job, either for the government or for a small shop, fine, you were doing all right. If you were a farmer, fine; you had to work hard, but you were able to feed your family and maybe have a little bit of money left. But for everybody else there was really nothing and so, you know, young women and sometimes, frankly, families, were forced to desperate measures to have enough money to survive and I think most people understood that these jobs that were advertised were not really dancing jobs or maids' jobs or waiting on tables and so on; I think most people knew what the women would be getting into when they went off

to the Middle East or western Europe or whatever but they probably didn't realize the degree to which the women would be brutalized in the process, virtually enslaved.

Anyhow, we had a major program with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other ministries in Bulgaria to conduct public awareness campaigns and I must say, the Bulgarians were good at this. Where in other countries, in my experience, you can always get government agreement to various anti-trafficking programs—after all, no government official is going to say he's in favor of prostitution. But, once agreement on certain measures has been reached, the same official would not really do anything to implement the program he had just agreed to. It's like, OK, this is a problem that has been there forever and will be there forever. We are not going to lift our finger to resolve it. We'll go through some face saving motions or whatever but we're not going to help very much. That would be the typical attitude of many officials—including, probably, in the United States. But the Bulgarians really turned to on it and so they did things like actually stop suspicious drivers at the border just getting ready to enter Turkey or whatever and impound the car, question the women, return them back to their homes. You know, this actually happened and it was very invigorating, I must say, but it cost millions of dollars; it was quite an intensive program. We did it in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration in Bulgaria. Sharon, who had worked for IOM in Belgrade, helped set up an IOM office in Sofia solely devoted to working on trafficking issues in Bulgaria.

Q: Did you see—the European Union was getting itself tied up, particularly if you think of France and Germany, with all sorts of rules so that it was becoming less and less desirable for firms to set up shop in, say, France or Germany because of all the work rules. Was Bulgaria at the time representing a possible place—In other words, you know, I'm not talking about being exploited but I mean they could do things cheaper and probably as well?

MILES: That's the key, doing things cheaper. And there was a very good work ethic among the Bulgarians. You know, they had had German kings for about 100 years, and for whatever reason, maybe the attitude of the German kings, I don't know, but Bulgarians worked pretty hard. The countryside looked better tended than, for example, in Serbia or parts of Turkey. So people were willing to work and work hard. The American Standard Company—known as International Standard abroad—which produces toilet, bath and shower fixtures, developed a partnership with a small communist era porcelain factory in the small town of Sevlievo, right in the middle of Bulgaria. That partnership had expanded very successfully to the point where, when we were there, they had hired over 11,000 workers and were turning out a tremendous quantity of items for export and the domestic market. They had gone beyond making only porcelain items and had established a new plant where they were using Bulgarian copper to mix with other metals to make chrome plated metal shower fixtures and faucets. Some of these items were extremely expensive. You know, when you get into the upper stratosphere of shower fixtures and the like, you're talking several hundred dollars for a shower head that weighs maybe three pounds and costs accordingly. These are serious objects. They are so well designed and made, they're almost art objects. And because of

the availability of inexpensive metal in Bulgaria and the good and relatively cheap labor force, International Standard could make and sell a quality product for less than its foreign competitors.

Q: Well now, where stood Bulgaria in the European Union at the time you were there?

MILES: They were not members at that time. They were working on the acquis. I'll explain what that is. As a country works toward membership in the European Union, it must conform its laws and regulations to the accumulated laws and regulations making up the standard accepted by the EU member countries. There is a whole series of issues, called "Chapters", on which the country will have to make identifiable progress. The whole set is called the *Acquis Communautaire*, and the acquis is different for each applicant country since each country is starting out from a different base. So in a country like Bulgaria the EU experts would be very careful before they checked the "In Compliance" box for the chapter dealing with the issue of trafficking but in, I don't know, take Norway as an example, that wouldn't be much of an issue. And so the Bulgarians were systematically working on the chapters of the acquis, which is a very, very complicated process and inspectors come out from the European Union and they talk to the experts in the country that's involved and they say yes, you have made progress on it. Like six or seven points that have to be agreed, within each of those six or seven points there may be 20 or 30 others and so we're talking about a hell of a lot of discussion and negotiation and fact finding that takes place. And so that was all being done while I was there. The same thing was going on with regard to NATO membership as well but NATO membership is a rather more elastic process than is EU membership.

Q: Did you feel that Bulgaria was basically on its way?

MILES: Absolutely. I was quite impressed with the Bulgarians. They're now in the EU, they're members of NATO and their GDP continues to rise and employment rises with it.

Q: What was the impression you were getting—I mean, they were the neighbors of Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia—about our actions, particularly in Kosovo and all that? Did that have much of—

MILES: They, I think, were more sympathetic to the Serbs than to the Kosovar-Albanians but it was tempered by the fact that they had never had that close of a relationship with the Serbs in the first place so they basically just stayed out of it. Under some pressure from us they agreed that they would take a certain number of Kosovar-Albanian refugees but they were never thinking in terms of more than three digits, like 300 or 500.

Q: Yes, and they probably all went back fairly soon.

MILES: Well, I don't know that any of them actually came. Macedonia and Albania were able to absorb quite a few. The Bulgarians were not very keen on the idea. They felt that they had enough problems with their own minorities, the Roma and the Turkish

communities in Bulgaria, and they didn't really want to introduce yet a third minority element.

Q: Had the old linguistic dispute of what is Macedonian and what is Bulgarian and what is Greek—I mean, was that still playing or was that—

MILES: Yes, but not with the intensity that was there in the '60s and '70s. I think everyone just felt they had other axes to grind and this wasn't an issue they wanted to spend much time on.

Q: How about the Roma?

MILES: Well, there's a very large Roma population in Bulgaria and they are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Very high unemployment in this group and, as a group, they are way below the Bulgarian poverty line. Now, there was a Turkish political party, even though according to the Bulgarian constitution ethnic parties are not allowed, but in fact there was an ethnic Turkish party and that in a way helped to take care of the issues of the ethnic Turkish population, but there really was no political party that took care of the ethnic Roma population and, for the most part, they lived in some fairly miserable conditions. We spent a certain amount of time with local community people who were trying to improve the conditions of some of these sections of town where they lived. There would be a Roma quarter of town; I mean, it was legal for individual Roma to live anywhere they wanted to, but as a matter of practice probably ninety five percent or more of the Roma lived in certain sections or certain areas of the towns or in certain villages and these were really shanty towns, bidonvilles, and often without running water, with a sewer running right down the middle of the street, total fire hazards right and left, miserable schooling conditions, etc. We spent a fair amount of time, and we found a sympathetic response on the part of some of the mayors, especially in those towns where the Roma population was a fairly small—Vidin, for example. But in areas down near the Turkish border where the Roma population was higher, we found a less positive response. And, of course, those towns near the Turkish border had a high percentage of ethnic Turks as well. That also caused some problems.

I remember going to one town, I can't recall the name of it offhand, a fairly large town not far from the Turkish border, where the town was probably half Turkish and the other half ethnic Bulgarians and Roma. I asked the Mayor how many Turkish policemen there were out of a force of about 300. Well, there were five. There were five ethnic Turkish policemen out of a police force of 300.

Q: This is tape 10, side one, with Dick Miles. Dick, why don't we stop at this point?

MILES: That's fine.

Q: And we'll pick up—and we're going to be talking about Bulgaria and the minorities, minority problems. And was Greece a factor at all here?

MILES: There were some business ties, yes. We can talk about that.

Q: And also we haven't talked about Turkey in particular. And also, did you get any feel for Black Sea commerce and were things happening Black Sea-wise?

MILES: I can sum that up pretty quick but let's talk about that next time.

Q: Okay, yes.

MILES: The short answer is not much.

Q: Okay.

Today is the 2nd of July, 2007. Okay, Dick, where are we now? We're picking this up with—?

MILES: Just a few odds and ends about Bulgaria.

Q: Okay. The Black Sea and all.

MILES: Yes. Well, let's talk about the minorities just for a minute. It's interesting that in neighboring Yugoslavia, in Serbia, you had terrible problems with the different ethnic groups. These differences actually tore the country apart and caused NATO intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the NATO air war over Serb mistreatment of the Albanians down in Kosovo. In Bulgaria you also had ethnic differences, even some discrimination, but Bulgaria was just a different kind of a place than Yugoslavia or even Serbia was. I'm not trying to whitewash the Bulgarians. Even in the late 1980s there was an attempt to lessen the influence of the ethnic Turkish minority. There was a serious campaign at that time to force ethnic Turks in Bulgaria to change their names to Bulgarian-type names and several hundred thousand ethnic Turks were forced out to go back to Turkey where they hadn't lived for several hundred years. And there was even some violence, actually. This period of repression was relatively short, but it was quite severe and the memories of that period have lingered on. But, unlike Milosevic's Serbia, the Bulgarians were trying to deal with it. They did allow an ethnic Turkish party to exist even though the Bulgarian constitution forbade ethnic political parties. And efforts were made, imperfectly and not without difficulty, I'd say, to try to bring the Turks more into the mainstream of Bulgarian life. For example, a few ethnic Turks were appointed to ministerial positions in the Bulgarian government and some efforts were made to hire more Turkish policemen and that sort of thing. But it was slow progress and there were very few Turks in public office; very, very few Turks held judicial positions. Not very many Turks were in the police forces, not very many Turks were officers in the armed forces and so on.

With the Roma, the situation was a little different. As far as I know there hadn't been any Bulgarian, official Bulgarian, effort in post-communist times to discriminate against the Roma or to de-Romanize them in the way the campaign had been carried on against the

ethnic Turks. But there were almost an equal number of Roma and they were at the lowest end of the economic ladder in Bulgaria when they could find work at all. There was some unofficial but active social and economic discrimination against the Roma and their lot was not a particularly happy one. Sometimes in the periodic censuses the Roma would identify themselves as Turks or even as ethnic Bulgarians so the numbers were a bit questionable. And some Roma actually did participate in the ethnic Turkish party activity but for the most part they were party-less and they had very little social impact in Bulgarian society because they didn't have jobs, they weren't large land owners, they didn't have a base from which to grow, in a sense. It wasn't a very nice situation.

Sharon and I spent some time visiting Roma communities and visiting NGOs that were trying to deal with Roma issues in order to demonstrate some support for the plight of the Roma. We met the mayor of a little town up on the Danube River who was pretty active in trying to improve the lot of the Roma up there. There was an ethnic Roma radio station and also a nascent TV station up there. Sharon and I went there and let them interview us. We visited some of the schools with a high concentration of Roma. They didn't have separate Roma schools in Bulgaria but of course schools were situated on a neighborhood basis so the school near the Roma section would be mostly Roma and it would inevitably be a very poor school.

We also did similar things with the ethnic Turkish population but the Turks were considerably better organized and there were a lot of Turkish businesses. In addition, there were fairly strong ties between Turks in Turkey and ethnic Turks in Bulgaria, business ties, family ties and so on. The Turks had their political party, and so their situation was not as dire as was the situation with the Roma, although the memories of the forced Bulgarization of their names and government efforts to reduce the size of the population in the 1980s still rankled. There was a very good television program that was produced in Bulgaria while we were there. The producers got hold of some very graphic film that had been taken at the time of the campaign and they also interviewed some of the ethnic Turks who had witnessed situations in which soldiers would basically surround a village and load people into trucks and haul them off to the Turkish border and dump them off. This program was quite well done and was shown on national television.

But other minorities in Bulgaria, and there were other minorities, had no particular problems. There was an active Jewish community. The only people who had difficulties in this context were Mormon missionaries. There was very little tolerance shown for their activities, as is true, I think, in most orthodox countries.

Q: There is absolutely none in Greece. I was in Greece one time. Article one of the Greek constitution is "No proselytization will be allowed."

MILES: Yes. I don't think that was part of the law in Bulgaria but it was certainly practiced by the population and by the authorities and so the Mormons had a difficult time. I had many conversations with the Bulgarian Patriarch and with bishops of the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria and I never made a lot of headway on that issue. On the other hand, I did make some headway in talking to local political officials. There was a

real problem with some of the Mormon activity and the resultant anti-Mormon activity on the part of both clergy and lay members of the Orthodox Church in the second largest town in Bulgaria, Plovdiv. I remember going over to Plovdiv several times. My officers also went over there but I went myself several times and I talked to the regional governor over there and to the mayor. In Bulgaria, you would receive a decent hearing from the local officials and you would probably go away with the feeling that, while they might drag their feet a little bit, they really wanted to do the right thing, whereas in dealing with Milosevic's Serb officials on the Albanian issue you got the distinct impression they didn't really give a damn and they had no intention whatsoever of doing the right thing. So that was a big difference, an enormous difference.

Q: By the way, with the Roma, one of the things that one has heard for years, centuries maybe, but saying, you know—I mean they call them gypsies, you know—they won't stay put, they love to roam, so you can't school them, and they're clannish, and they're thieves. Did you run across that in Bulgaria?

MILES: Yes, sir, and in Serbia too, where there were a lot of gypsies—Roma. The word, Roma, is the same thing as gypsy, but I understand that the word Roma is more polite. Yes, widespread prejudice really, although the days of the roving gypsies were pretty much over. I think you almost find more of that in England or Ireland or someplace than you would find in Eastern Europe. I guess the communists didn't really have much tolerance for this vagabond life and before that, the German occupiers and their allies were as hard on the Roma as they were on the Jews. I was just looking at an article the other day on Wikipedia and more Roma died in the concentration camps in Serbia than Jews. So there are some pretty horrible statistics there.

But at any rate, I think that, during the communist period, the roving gypsies in Eastern Europe and that part of the world had pretty much died out. So they weren't mobile but the opposite. They were confined for all sorts of socio-economic reasons to what amounts to ghettos, sometimes rural ghettos but ghettos nonetheless. There were some special difficulties. A social and economic conflict had broken out between the Roma population and the ethnic Bulgarians in a small town near Veliko Tarnovo in the center of Bulgaria. I don't recall the circumstances exactly—I think it had to do with a refusal on the part of the ethnic Bulgarian shopkeepers to buy the traditional Roma agricultural products, milk especially. In turn, the Roma had declared a boycott against the goods sold by the shops that were refusing to buy from the producers of milk and vegetables and fruit. There may well have been underlying causes but the real issue was enmity between the Roma and the ethnic Bulgarians in that particular area. It was kind of a nasty situation and one in which there was no direct U.S. foreign policy interest, but I thought it was something that we should at least learn about. The facts are always hard to come by in these cases and I thought we should determine as best as we could what the facts were. We did that and then we did try to intervene in a somewhat delicate way. After all, Embassy officers are not social workers. We talked to representatives of both the ethnic Roma community and of the ethnic Bulgarian community and then we talked to the Bulgarian authorities who had responsibility for law and order. I talked to the Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo myself

about the situation and, even though this wasn't really an area under his jurisdiction, he went over there to see what was going on.

I had asked a young officer, Alain Norman, to take this on and he did a wonderful job. He even got the leaders of the two communities to convene a public meeting and then he attended that meeting. OK, that was something maybe a U.S. Foreign Service Officer in a friendly country shouldn't be getting into but I thought it was appropriate in that situation. And so he attended the meeting and addressed this really quite angry crowd of both ethnic Roma and ethnic Bulgarians and he tried to moderate and to help them find some middle ground between them. It was quite dramatic and difficult. An interesting experience for him, of course.

Q: You know, it's interesting. I did a book called The American Consul in the 1870s. Our Consul General in, well, it would have been Constantinople at the time, Eugene Schuyler, got involved with a British correspondent on reporting on the Bulgarian horrors.

MILES: I remember that period. That violence caused quite a fuss in England as well and in America too.

Q: Quite a fuss. And, as I say, our Consul General in Istanbul got in the middle of this and helped expose a lot of the stuff which caused a lot of problems for the Turkish government, Ottoman government, and did help alleviate things. So we had—

MILES: Well, there is that tradition and there also was the famous case around the turn of the century of Ellen Stone. She was an American missionary who was kidnapped by nationalist brigands in Bulgaria in 1901, I think, and our consular authorities in Constantinople got involved in the case because we recognized the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government, according to the account that I read, was rather lackadaisical in pursuing these ethnic Bulgarian bandits, basically, nationalistic bandits. And there was a little bit of a Stockholm syndrome there in which the American missionary didn't want to pursue charges against the people who had kidnapped her and so on. It really was quite an interesting story and it didn't reflect very well on the Bulgarian authorities at that time who did have to operate under the control of the Turks.

In 2001 the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations with the United States. In a way, this would have been premature because formal diplomatic relations were not established until 1903, but it's true that we agreed on the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1901. In 1901, however, the Bulgarians had rejected the idea of having someone from the Legation in Constantinople represent the United States in Bulgaria. I pointed that out and then I said, "I'll oppose this celebration unless the case of Ellen Stone is among the exhibits." I said I think it's an important part of the history of that time and I don't see how you can ignore it. Well, the Bulgarians didn't want to do that and so we didn't commemorate the 100th anniversary in 2001. It was commemorated very nicely in 2003 by my successor who was less squeamish about the case of Ms. Stone.

Q: Well then, is there anything else that we should cover in Bulgaria?

MILES: Well, you mentioned the Black Sea cooperative efforts but it's really hard to discuss that in a short time. It would be worth an academic study but it's so difficult to find real cooperation among the Black Sea countries that I don't want to take up a lot of time to discuss it. There's the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation with headquarters in Istanbul. We are observers to BSEC and they do some good work. There is a little bit of military cooperation through a rather informal arrangement, the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group [BLACKSEAFOR]. We don't participate in BLACKSEAFOR activities, since neither the Turks nor the Russians want us to take part in the periodic BLACKSEAFOR exercises. And there is a little bit of environmental protection work that goes on among the Black Sea countries but it's all very small scale—nothing like it should be. I met with the head of BSEC in Istanbul to see what the organization was doing and to offer encouragement and so forth. But frankly none of even BSEC's activities amounted to very much. I guess the time isn't quite right yet; the countries on the Black Sea all have their own problems and they are just not willing to undertake serious measures, which would mean basically controlling the fishing that goes on much more strictly, controlling the smuggling, and controlling the pollution—people dumping industrial waste and human waste into the Black Sea. The Black Sea has a very delicate ecological structure. You know, the Black Sea is a peculiar body of water with a very tiny amount of relatively fresh water at the top and then oxygen free water in the bottom which doesn't support very much animal or plant life. It's a very special and sensitive environment and one which is being harmed every day in the week.

In this context, one interesting thing happened while I was in Bulgaria. Some Bulgarian scientists had come up with the theory that the great flood mentioned in the Bible and in other ancient accounts really reflected a time many years ago, perhaps as much as 5000 or 7500 years ago, in which a higher level of water in the Mediterranean had somehow broken through into the Black Sea and flooded the littoral coast of the Black Sea, the low lying coast, especially in the northern part and northwestern part of the Black Sea, causing incredible flooding and being reflected then in the legends and myths and memories of the great flood.

A little bit of scientific research had been done which made it all sound plausible. The geology of the Bosporus and so on is such that if there had been that kind of an imbalance, the flooding would have not taken place in a matter of days or minutes but over a period of years because the volume of the water was so huge and it would be something like the water of Niagara Falls plunging into the Black Sea for, I don't know, five years or something like that. And then the scientists had also done extensive research along the shore of Bulgaria and Romania and they believed they had found the remains of submerged Neolithic village and whatnot. Bob Ballard, the famous undersea explorer, came out to Bulgaria; he had been there several times actually but this time he came with the appropriate hydrological equipment and a vessel and so on and was then going out on the Black Sea with his Bulgarian colleagues. We had a reception for him at our residence in Sofia and the people came up from the research organizations and institutions on the

Black Sea coast. The scientists were excited; they had never been in an American Embassy before and Ballard was there, a very gracious fellow I must say. A unique opportunity for us to entertain some interesting people that we would otherwise not have met.

I know this narrative is getting awfully long, but I have to tell one anecdote. The reception was out of doors, little tables piled with finger food, mini-sandwiches and so on were scattered around the lawn. We had a very salty Serb cat, still have him as a matter of fact. Name of Max. My son Richard was visiting us—he too was very excited about meeting Bob Ballard. Anyhow, Richard watched while Max wandered through the crowd, then reached up and with his paw, picked up one of the little sandwiches off the table, sniffed it and then put it back! He then found another one, more to his liking, picked that one off the plate and ate it. A real diplomatic cat.

Q: There was an interesting article from The National Geographic.

MILES: That's right. They sponsored Ballard's expedition.

Q: Were we still sending a U.S. war vessel through the Bosporus from time to time? I mean, I think the controlling authority was the Treaty of Luzon or something?

MILES: The Montreux Convention.

Q: Just to show— both show the fight but also to keep it operative.

MILES: Yes, we did. Once a year or so there would be a small flotilla or a single ship that would come through. There were several U. S. Navy ship visits to the Bulgarian coast while I was there; I always went down to attend those. They were not provocative; they were small ships. No battle ships or aircraft carriers because of the limits of the Montreux Convention.

Q: Well then, you left Bulgaria when?

MILES: I left in the summer of 2002.

Q: By the way, were you in much consultation with our embassies, ambassadors in Ankara, Bucharest, Belgrade, Athens and Skopje and all? Was there much in the way of looking at—

MILES: At a regional problem?

Q: Yes.

MILES: Not really, not at that time. I arrived there in 1999 just as the air war in Kosovo and Serbia was winding down. At that time, I think everyone in the region was preoccupied with their own affairs. You remember the Kosovo air war was followed by

rather serious fighting between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians in Macedonia. We were pretty busy trying to sort out the changed political situation between Serbia and Kosovo.

Romania was Romania. As I think I mentioned in a previous session Romania has this great, long, historic border on the other side of the Danube River. But as far as the Bulgarians and the Romanians were concerned, the Danube may as well have been a thousand miles wide rather than a mile or less.

With Greece there were no particular problems. There had been in the past. If you had asked about Greek-Bulgarian relations in the past, I could talk for quite a while about it, but in the period 1999 to 2002, it was all very quiet and everyone was quite preoccupied with their own affairs. There was some considerable discussion about the construction of a second bridge across the Danube at Vidin. There was a lot of talk about that and a lot of discussion with European colleagues, mostly about who would be funding it. We Americans were not much involved in the process.

And then the only other thing I guess that could be mentioned is the nuclear plants up along the Danube which the European Union was concerned about.

Q: You know, a repeat of Chernobyl.

MILES: Like that. They were much better maintained, but that was an issue that we were involved in and the Europeans were even more involved in.

I don't think I've mentioned the American South European Cooperation Initiative-SECI, and SECI of course had been very active in the Balkans—Serbia and Macedonia especially. But SECI hadn't been much involved in Bulgaria. This changed while I was there and we saw a steady stream of visitors from SECI trying hard to increase cross-border cooperation in the region. SECI was a rather strange organization. Dick Schifter ran SECI out of his hip pocket from the State Department. He had a staff of about one-and-a-half people, I think, but he himself was something of a human dynamo, even today. He had a tiny bit of money so he would recruit retired Foreign Service officers or whatever to come out under SECI auspices and try push things along. And because of his energy and enthusiasm, that had some effect.

Q: Well then, 2002, did you leave?

MILES: Yes, 2002. I turned 65 in January 2002 when I was still in Bulgaria, and that meant mandatory retirement, you know, unless you had the Career Ambassador rank, which I didn't. And so I was getting ready to retire, but I had written a letter to Rich Armitage and to Beth Jones, who was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs at that time, Armitage being Deputy Secretary. I knew them both well, and I said that I was getting ready to retire and I was perfectly happy to do that but that I was still interested in working if something was available. Now, 99 times out of 100, a letter like that would either result in a polite, negative reply or maybe not even that. But in this case, the timing

was good. Joe Presel, a good friend of ours who had been Ambassador in Uzbekistan and whose name had been moving forward to be Ambassador to Georgia, decided he would retire from the Foreign Service and would no longer be in consideration for that assignment. So when Joe dropped out, I got a phone call from Washington when I was out on the Black Sea coast, during an official visit out there, and Beth asked me if I'd be interested in going to Georgia. Sharon was with me. I remember talking to her over the roof of the car. We had just stopped for the evening and I said, "Well, they're offering me Georgia. Do you want to go to Georgia?" And we always liked Georgia—who wouldn't? And so she said yes and I said yes and the next thing I knew I was on my way to Georgia.

Q: Okay. Well then, let's take Georgia. You went to Georgia from when to when?

MILES: Well, I went out there pretty fast. I left Bulgaria a little early because they needed someone in Georgia and so in the summer of 2002 I arrived in Georgia and then I left in August of 2005. So I was in Georgia for three years and three months.

Q: Okay, 2002 what was the situation in Georgia before you got there?

MILES: Now, I had been in a lot of difficult places, a lot of places—I mean, hell, coups in Azerbaijan, turmoil in Leningrad and in the Baltic States. We even went to war in Serbia. So I had been in a lot of places where there was economic and political malaise, but I had never been in a place in which hopelessness on the part of the population, and even on the part of the leadership, was so palpable as it was in Georgia. Eduard Shevardnadze was the President. He had a good reputation. He had been a tough corruption-fighting communist official in Soviet Georgia as Minister of the Interior and, later, as First Secretary of the Party. He had demonstrated that he could be tough enough. And it was on that basis that he rose to national prominence. He was Soviet Foreign Minister in the last days of the Soviet Union and he worked closely with Secretary Baker and with the European leaders to help with the peaceful dismantlement of the Soviet empire. Then he had returned to Georgia to help bring Georgia forward into the 21st century. And all well and good. He had a lot of friends in the United States, from the President's father on down, and knew many senators and congressmen, and he knew the Western European leadership. In other words, he came very well recommended. We all thought highly of him. We had a good relationship with Georgia but it was clear back in Washington and doubly clear when I arrived in Georgia that, by 2002, Shevardnadze had lost the will to govern and in a certain sense had lost the capability of governing. People were basically just waiting until April of 2005 when his second term would end—they have term limits in Georgia—and some new president, no one quite knew who it would be, would be elected, whether it would be one of the young opposition leaders who had begun to spring up or whether it would be someone from within the apparatus. But people just could hardly wait until that would happen and there might be a chance for the country to move forward. People both within and without the government saw no chance of moving forward while Shevardnadze was president. A most unfortunate situation.

In 2002, revenues were hardly being collected. Bills weren't being paid. The American energy company AES which U.S. taxpayers had helped to subsidize was hemorrhaging

money because they couldn't get private consumers of electricity to pay their bills and, in fact, they couldn't even get the state institutions to pay their bills. The state railway system is an electrified railway system and was actually a money making operation—it was one of the few money making operations in Georgia since, at that time, it carried much of the crude oil from the Azeri Caspian Sea deposits over to the port of Batumi and on out for sale to Western markets. So it had money but it didn't want to pay its bills either and Shevardnadze wasn't willing to make it pay its bills. Later, under pressure from me and others, it did force the company to pay up, but not in time, and not enough to save AES which sold out to the Russian energy company RAO-UES [Unified Energy System of Russia].

Even worse, pensions, which, on average, were only $7 a month, weren't being paid. Civil service salaries weren't being paid. Teachers' and medical workers' salaries were in arrears for as much as two years or more.

Q: But, you know, it seems governments usually build and exist just on the amount of vitality of one leader, you know, particularly where it's not a Stalinist form of government. I would have thought that Shevardnadze could have retired to a beach resort and somebody else could have been pressed into taking over. What was happening?

MILES: If he had retired to a beach resort that might have happened but he didn't do that. He remained in his office and the psychological-political situation was such that neither the members of the parliament nor the opposition seemed able to act. In essence, I think they were waiting for the April 2005 elections. There was going to be a parliamentary election in the fall of 2003 and political activists were preparing for that as a kind of a rehearsal for the presidential election. In 2002, people were not really looking for street action nor were they engaged in conspiracies to oust Shevardnadze. They were going through the motions of the democratic system but with the idea that change was still a year and a half or two years away.

In 2002, crime and corruption were rampant. You had to pay bribes to accomplish the most simple thing, policemen were not paid basically. A police or Customs Officer job was considered a license to steal. Policemen would buy their jobs from the local police chief or the regional police chief or the Minister, depending on how high up the job was, and he would then buy his uniform and his equipment, such as it was, and then he would collect bribes.

Physical conditions in the hospitals, clinics and schools were unbelievably bad. No electricity, no heat, no running water; 400 children and the teachers would have to go out and use an outhouse in the back. Buildings not painted or repaired for 10 years; the windows broken and replaced with a piece of cardboard. In one school I visited where we had provided a little bit of assistance, individual classrooms—and I think this was fairly typical—were heated by little tin stoves. I grew up in an environment where we heated our house with a wood stove and there is nothing wrong with a reliable cast iron wood stove but these were little, leaky stoves made of very thin sheet metal and with a stovepipe running out through one of the panes where the window was. And each child,

every day, had to bring in a couple of sticks of firewood to fuel the fire in this little tin stove to heat the class room that day. And the teachers, who had not gotten paid in years, were teaching out of simple dedication to their profession.

I remember more than once visiting schools with Sharon and there would be no blackboards. They had been stolen by thieves or sold by the administration or whatever, and I'd ask, "How can you teach mathematics or how can you teach language without a blackboard to write on?" And they said, "Well, it's not easy." And they couldn't buy one out of their own salary because they weren't getting a salary. It was truly pathetic.

And it was worse than pathetic when it came to the medical system where the same conditions prevailed, where the equipment which had been there, old Soviet equipment, had broken down long ago and was generally not working, and where there was no heat and no electricity and maybe no running water. I mean, it was terrible.

I remember going to one maternity clinic over in the Azeri-speaking part of Georgia where one of the American oil companies had been doing some exploratory work and they had put a little bit of money into rehabilitation of this maternity clinic. And even after having been rehabilitated, the clinic was just pathetic. But the local people were very proud of the fact that in the delivery room in this maternity clinic they now had windows in the window frames because people had stolen or sold off the very frames of the windows, the windows and the frames, so it was just an open hole where the windows had been and women were delivering babies in the summer in the heat with the flies and all that and in the winter they would just put a blanket over the window and try to keep out the cold. It was dreadful. But in this case, this one case, the American company had been able to provide a frame, a window and a screen for the windows and so there was a semblance of sanitation and so on.

And again, the medical workers weren't being paid and in order to get medical care, you would pay the doctor directly—you'd bribe the doctor in essence to provide you with a little bit of medical care, and your family would bring food for you and maybe a brazier and some charcoal to the hospital ward for a tiny bit of heat. I could repeat that experience throughout the whole society: streetlights burned out and curbs beginning to break down on the side of the roads; enormous potholes in the roads and streets.

I remember going down from Tbilisi to Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, a trip which should take about two hours, and it took more than five hours. It was just washboard construction up and down, sideways, and you were just jiggled to death. In some places, the paved road had just disappeared. Interestingly enough, that same road continuing on into Armenia was in much better condition there—almost normal, in fact. And of course a lot of people in that part of Georgia are farmers and they were trying to bring eggs to market or watermelons or something like that and I'm sure that a lot of the produce was lost simply from being jiggled about on these awful roads. If you had a small truck and the truck was bounced up in the air about a foot and then came down with a crash you can imagine what would happen to 40 dozen eggs you might have; you'd end up with two dozen eggs and be glad to have them.

Well, before I left Washington I was told by an old colleague, Dan Fried, over at the NSC, "We have great regard for Shevardnadze, we appreciate who he is, but the country has become almost moribund and is in a dangerous condition." I was told I should practice tough love—that was the expression that they used—I should practice tough love to Shevardnadze to get him to implement some of the reforms that were necessary to get the society moving, starting with the collection of state revenues so the state could begin to pay some of the back pensions and the civil servant salaries and all and then to begin to work on the infrastructure and to make better use of our USAID programs that we provided. And, of course, I was to do what I could to help AES, the American energy company out.

And meanwhile there were serious security problems in several places. There was tension between Georgia and Russia over the presence in Georgia of several hundred ethnic Chechen fighters. Chechnya borders Georgia on the North East, the high ridge line of the Caucasus Mountains marking the border. Just south of the border there is an area called the Pankisi Gorge where ethnic Chechens, called Kists, have been living for several hundred years. This is a small area, tapering to a point in the north and broadening to a distance of a few miles toward the south. During the fighting in Chechnya, several hundred Chechen refugees had come across the border to take refuge with their ethnic kinsmen in the Pankisi Gorge. Subsequently, several hundred—maybe as many as 700—Chechen fighters also began to come over the mountain passes before they froze up in the winter. They'd winter over in the Gorge and then, when the passes thawed out in the late spring, they'd go back to Chechnya and kill Russians. Not surprisingly, the Russians didn't like this state of affairs. The Russians were putting a lot of pressure on the Georgians to a) deal with it, b) allow the Russians to deal with it, or c) let them engage in joint efforts—"We'll send a patrol and you can join us; we'll clean these fellows out for you." The Georgian authorities had lost control of the Gorge and they didn't like any of these options. So the Russians began to threaten unilateral action. Russian airplanes would fly over for reconnaissance, perhaps a helicopter would fly over. And on one occasion an aircraft or a helicopter, it was never quite clear to me, but probably a fixed wing aircraft, dropped a couple of what are called iron bombs. These were just regular World War II-type bombs. They probably thought they were striking a camp site which the Chechen fighters had been using. Whether it was a Chechen fighter encampment or not, there were no fighters there and the bombs unfortunately killed a woman gathering wood. In other words, the situation was getting rather perilous.

Shortly before I arrived, Shevardnadze asked President Bush, George W. Bush, to provide some American military training to his totally disorganized armed forces in order to provide a force capable of backing up the Ministry of Internal Affairs' troops and special services. The idea was that the Ministry's paramilitary forces would go into the Gorge and restore Georgian authority there. And by the way there was a lot of purely criminal activity in and out of the Gorge, gun running, narcotics and so on, kidnapping for money, not to mention the presence of a sizeable handful of international terrorists who had found a safe haven in the Gorge.

President Bush had agreed to provide that training and the first Special Forces trainers arrived in Georgia almost the same week I did. I think I was there in May of 2002 and the trainers arrived just about the same time. They trained one battalion at a time, 400 to 500 men and a few women. On my recommendation, we got special permission to salt in a few members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs troops to allow better coordination later. After training the first battalion, the Special Forces went back to the U.S. to train up for Iraq, and Marine Forces Europe, MARFOREUR, took over. The Marines had not had as much experience at the Special Forces guys in training foreign troops, but they learned fast and did an excellent job. This training proved quite successful and after training up the first four battalions in succession, under GTEP, the Georgia Train and Equip Program, the training program was resumed under slightly different parameters and renamed—it became SSOP. I can never remember what SSOP stands for: Sustainment and Stability Operations Program, I think. SSOP training was very similar to GTEP training except, under SSOP, there was more of an emphasis on peacekeeping since so many Georgian troops were joining the Coalition Forces in Iraq. At one point, there were 2000 Georgia troops in Iraq. A remarkable contribution for a small country.

Well, as soon as the training had begun, Shevardnadze did as he said he would. He sent his Ministry of Interior troops along with some of his special services into the Pankisi Gorge. The Army, tanks, artillery and all, backed them up at the southern end of the Pankisi Gorge. The special services people went to the leaders of the Chechen fighters and said, "OK. Your welcome is over. If you want to stay here, hand over your weapons—and no more crossing the border. If you want to go back to Chechnya, go, but don't come back." Well, this all worked rather smoothly. There was only one serious incident. A group of fighters went back into Chechnya. They passed through the first group of Russian border guards either through bribery or trickery on the part of the Russians. So they went further in where they were then severely mauled by a second group of Russian border guards. The Chechens somehow got back across the border in reduced numbers but with their weapons and at that point the Georgian internal troops surrounded them and told them that they could stay in Georgia until their wounds were healed and all that but they had to cache their weapons; they wouldn't be allowed to take their weapons back down into the Pankisi Gorge. The Chechens didn't want to give up their weapons and there was quite a standoff for a while but in the end they had to accept the Georgian conditions.

Then there was a big diplomatic fuss. It was a tragicomedy in a sense. Of those in this group, the Russians asked that that 13 of them be extradited to Russia to be tried as terrorists and the Georgians really didn't want to do that. They just wiggled and squirmed about that, asked for detailed information and so forth, but, under pressure, they finally did return most of them to Russia. But in at least two cases the Chechen fighters had provided a nom de guerre, you know, a made up name for themselves; they hadn't provided their real names, and the Russians nonetheless came back with detailed indictments using the nom de guerre. Either they didn't know that these were not their real names or they didn't care.

So that was one issue. And then the other major issue was the separatist provinces. There were three. Adjara on the southwestern Black Sea coast, then Abkhazia, on the northwest Black Sea Coast and finally, South Ossetia, which is inland a little bit and which has a common border with North Ossetia in Russia. Abkhazia and South Ossetia had broken away from Georgian control during the civil war in '91-'92 and had never come back under Georgian control. They are not under Georgian control to this day and the situation remains quite difficult. There are Russian peacekeepers in both provinces. In the case of South Ossetia there is a small detachment of 500 Russian peacekeepers. By agreement there is a 500 person Russian battalion. There's another battalion of 500 South Ossetian peacekeepers and third battalion of 500 Georgian peacekeepers. And there's a very small observer group from the OSCE, seven or eight officers, who keep an eye on all this. There is constant tension back and forth, constant difficulties, shooting, abductions, silly political maneuvers; I could talk a long time about it but in essence in this little tiny place of 60,000 people there is a very real danger of a spark that could bring about a bigger war and that's still the situation after all these years.

Abkhazia is larger in size but maybe a little less volatile. Abkhazia has a population of several hundred thousand people and the Abkhaz are an ethnically different group from the Georgians. They speak a different language. That's true for Ossetia too; the Ossetes are ethnically differently and speak a different language. In both Abkhazia and South Ossetia there are economic interests, more so in the case of Abkhazia, I'd say. Because of the continuing separation from Georgia, Russian passports have been issued to the population in both provinces. There's a Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping force in Abkhazia of several thousand men, about 1800 as I recall. Technically it's Commonwealth force but it's really made up entirely of Russian soldiers and officers. There's a UN military observation group, UNOMIG, United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, in Abkhazia, which is unarmed but which contains slightly more than a hundred officers from different nationalities. UNOMIG observers go on patrol occasionally in the demilitarized area between Abkhazia and Georgia proper but they're accompanied by the Commonwealth peacekeepers who are armed and there have been incidents in which firearms have been used. So there is something of a dangerous situation in Abkhazia, but because of the size of the population, the size of the peacekeeping force, the presence of a significant group of international observers, the situation is probably less dangerous than the situation in the much smaller places of South Ossetia.

Q: I was talking, I think it was to Rudy Perina and he was saying that one of the things was that it was a popular place for retired Russian military.

MILES: Right, it is.

Q: So we have Ossetia and Abkhazia separate from Georgia somehow.

MILES: Abkhazia is a little bit like northern Florida or northern California. It's really quite beautiful. Stalin had dachas there, several dachas, actually. Beria had dachas there. I

have been to Abkhazia many times and it's truly a very beautiful place. I always enjoyed going down there. I even had lunch in Stalin's dacha once.

Q: Well, did we have any bone in this fight?

MILES: Well, the bone is that we were supportive of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and, at the same time, we didn't want to see the Georgians get engaged in a serious fight in either place. We believed that the Russians almost surely would get involved in any fighting which broke out in Abkhazia or South Ossetia. And frankly we weren't prepared to fight Russia over these issue and the Georgians, who would like nothing more than to see us fight Russia over the issues, were not always much help in avoiding incidents. Oddly enough, official Russian policy also supports Georgia sovereignty and territorial integrity and this policy has been repeated by Mr. Putin several times. But having said that, the Russians often do take measures that belie that statement and undermine, certainly undermine, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia. But at the same time I don't think the Russians want to see a fight break out. I think what they really want to see is the Georgians coming to them on bended knee and asking them to sort things out, but the Georgians always have preferred to work with their Western friends or with the international community which has set up various mechanisms, OSCE, United Nations, whatever, to try to deal with these situations. The Russians would prefer to bypass those organizations and deal directly with the Georgians as a supplicant. So what we have is a very dangerous and volatile stalemate complete with shooting incidents, bandit raids, kidnapping; you know, it can be rather violent there in the Caucasus.

Q: Did you have many face-to-face meetings with Shevardnadze?

MILES: Oh, scores.

Q: What was your reading of the man?

MILES: I suppose I met with Shevardnadze at least once a week while he was President, that is, for the first 18 months of my assignment. I always got along with him well but I became increasingly exasperated with his unwillingness or incapability of taking decisive action. I'm sure my exasperation showed from time to time, but never to the point of losing my temper. Shevardnadze is a real gentleman, he has a certain sense of humor, he is a democrat himself, at least he didn't have pretensions of grandeur. In contrast to his successor, Saakashvili, Shevardnadze was content to work through me rather than trying to establish direct lines of communication to the White House, the State Department and the Congress. I could always see Shevardnadze when I needed to. Sometimes I would bring someone along, sometimes I'd go alone, sometimes I'd have an interpreter, sometimes I wouldn't. In his office he didn't like to speak Russian; his Russian was of course impeccable, but in his office, he preferred to speak Georgian. He had a good tri-lingual interpreter so it didn't matter to me. And it took me a couple of meetings to realize that the reason was not linguistic nationalism or protocol or anything; the reason was he was tape recording all these conversations so that he could mine those recordings

later for his memoirs and he just preferred to do it all this in Georgian. And so we'd use these interpreters who were excellent, both my interpreter and his interpreters. And of course he spoke a little English. His Russian was perfect, my Russian was pretty good, and so there was never any problem with communication. And whenever there would be a little pause over a phrase of a word, you know, there would be about four people around the table who would fill in whatever language we needed to sort it out so that communication was very precise with no doubt whatsoever about it and the emotions were conveyed well and so forth. So he always was understanding, he always was prepared to say the right thing. That was never the issue. The issue was his willingness to implement the decisions that he had made and by the stage of his career when we were together from 2002 to 2003 he either was no longer capable of implementing unpleasant decisions, unpopular decisions or really unwilling to. He would say to me that he would do this or that and then either he wouldn't do it or he couldn't do it. It took me a little while to realize this and, of course, the Georgians had long since figured it out. That's one of the major reasons why you had this enormous feeling of hopelessness on the part not only of the population, but even on the part of the members of parliament, even the leaders of the parliament, his own ministers, his own personal staff; the feeling of hopelessness was absolutely and totally pervasive and depressing as hell.

I attended several cabinet meetings that he held. One, I remember, was at my request and it was to—there had been incidents in which the AES Company and another company, I can't remember the name of it, I'm embarrassed—it was an American, USAID-sponsored company which had taken over the distribution of electricity outside of Tbilisi. AES was a commercial company which was largely responsible for the Tbilisi electrical supply; the other company, the name of which escapes me, was a USAID-formed entity to help administer electricity outside of Tbilisi. And as part of the process that company had ordered power cutoffs to certain quarters of towns in Georgia where there was a very high percentage of non-payment over a lengthy period of time.

Well, the local governors out there, who were appointed by Shevardnadze, were under pressure from the population and the businesses. As a result, the mayors would send their local police, who nominally were supposed to be controlled out of Tbilisi, out to the power stations to turn the power back on. Now, in Georgia, these stations were very dangerous places because of the antiquated and overloaded equipment, water standing around on the floor, you know, 10 or 20,000 volts of electricity zapping around. There was obsolete and very inefficient equipment all over the damn place, you could easily electrocute yourself in there—and they would turn the power back on. It was a miracle that no one got killed doing this and, of course, the process meant that no one in his right mind was going to pay for electricity.

So I asked Shevardnadze to convene a meeting to which he would invite these offending governors, and mayors and representatives of both AES Company and of the USAID organized company—wish I could remember the name of it—and his own Minister of Energy and so on. And he did that. And we all had our say, basically, and then he spoke very sternly to the assembled governors and mayors saying that he had ordered that authority be given to the American companies to rationalize energy distribution system.

He made all the right points. The companies have to collect money in order to operate, he said, you must allow these cutoffs and you must encourage the people under your jurisdiction to pay their bills. Well, several of the governors and mayors got up and said, "Eduard Amvrosievich, we can't do that. The population won't allow us to do it and we won't be able to carry out your order." And he said, "This is an order and you will carry it out." And they said, "Well, we can't do that for you, we are simply unable to carry it out." And that was the end of the meeting. Well, I was stunned. What a hopeless situation! I couldn't believe it—a virtual collapse of presidential authority right in front of my eyes—and in tiny, little Georgia, a nation of only four and a half million people, for goodness sake.

Q: What was the pressure on the AID thing? Wasn't there a certain point to say screw it?

MILES: Well, we knew that if we threw in the towel the situation would get drastically worse, could even cause a popular uprising. You could easily have had violence and worse and not just in the capital.

Q: So did we keep—

MILES: We kept that USAID-sponsored company going but AES itself decided to sell out. It had an exposure of maybe as much as $200 million in investment, what with new equipment and all that, and it sold out to RAO-UES, the Russian electric company for about $40 million, plus the Russian company agreed to pay AES' debts in Georgia. So they took a huge loss but the mother company was now clear of that Georgian albatross around its neck.

Shevardnadze never did understand that. When I'd talk to him about it, I'd say this is going to happen, that is going to happen, and he'd say, "Oh, no, they're just bloodsuckers. They'll come around because they're making money out of this." And I said, "No, Mr. President, they're losing money over this." And he just didn't understand it himself, basically. And when Jim Baker came out in the summer of 2003 to talk about the election process for the parliament—and we might even get around to that today—that was a big story too. Baker of course is an energy sector person himself, had dealt a lot with energy issues around the world, and he knew about this situation. This was just before AES decided to sell out and he and Shevardnadze discussed it. I was there, and Shevardnadze said naively, maybe even disingenuously if I may say so, "Well, what's the problem?" Baker deferred to me and I said, "The problem, Mr. President, is the state enterprises won't pay their electric bills and the private people won't pay their bills and, as you know, there have been serious difficulties in carrying out the unfortunate measures which the companies are trying to impose to make the system more viable." Shevardnadze said, "I will guarantee payment to the company." And I said, in front of Baker and to the President, I said, "Mr. President, it has really gone beyond that now. I really don't believe you're in a position to be able to carry out that statement." And indeed the company sold out a few weeks later. Isn't that an unusual conversation to have with the president of a country?

Q: Did you have a feeling that this is part of the greater Russian movement of looking to gobble this up?

MILES: No, no, I think there was a combination of extreme poverty on the part of the Georgians at that point plus government incompetence and widespread bribery and corruption. Not much to do with the Russians, actually. AES put that company on the open market. The French were nibbling around a little bit, there was another American company that was interested in it, but only the Russians were willing to buy it. Anybody could have bought it. And I never got the impression, despite a lot of Georgian charges of Russian sabotage and blah, blah, blah, I never got the impression that Russian strategic interests were particularly involved.

Q: When I think of Georgia I think of being sort of a country with a lot of lush agricultural produce and all that stuff.

MILES: Well, You're not far off. That's how they survived. They survived in two ways. One is they are self-sufficient in food stuffs with the exception of grain. They don't produce enough wheat for the bread and they are big bread eaters so they have to import bread, mostly from Russia, some from the Ukraine, some from us actually; we sold them a lot of grain. So they basically are self-sufficient with food—meat, poultry, vegetables and fruit—and eager to export some of it. And second, they have this enormously strong network, we can't even conceive of it, of family support. I mean, if you think about it, here's a country the size of South Carolina, population of four and a half million people, and they've been marrying each other for at least the last three or four thousand years, and you can only imagine the interrelationships that have developed.

What it means is that virtually everyone is related to virtually everyone else. Now when the collective farms and state farms were broken up, individual farm families got little plots of one or two hectares of land. These are not absentee landowners like in Bulgaria. These people live on those little plots. They grow vegetables enough to provide for themselves and maybe sell a little bit in the nearest town or in Tbilisi. And the poor relatives in the city would go off to the village in the summer and would bring back 50 kilos of potatoes or 25 kilos of onions, maybe some corn meal, and basically they'd live on that, trading with their neighbors and somehow surviving until the next growing season. That's how the people of Georgia have survived since independence.

And then those few people that had state jobs—bureaucrats, teachers, policemen—would support a number of their relatives and friends. This wasn't easy—the average state salary was probably no more than thirty to forty dollars a month and even this was usually in great arrears. But when they got money, they would share it. In our case, in the Embassy, we had a fairly large number of Foreign Service National employees and we paid them a decent wage; they'd make several hundred dollars a month instead of just thirty dollars. Each one of these Embassy employees was probably supporting 25 or 30 people beyond their immediate family. And in that way the Georgians survived as they had survived for thousands of years. Very strong ties. In our case we would probably, unless someone was a real Scrooge, we would probably support a family member in dire

straits. They'd have to ask us and we might be a little bit miserly in responding, and some people would even say no, I have to take care of my own. In Georgia you wouldn't have to ask and the response wouldn't be miserly. You'd be given whatever your relative could afford to give you, literally. And so somehow people survived. When I say "survive", I mean just that. They weren't living healthy lives and the socio-economic statistics were all pretty dire. You can't feed your family on nothing but baked cornmeal cakes and not have a bad effect on their health.

And of course, and Americans always forget this, in the whole European communist world almost the only substantial thing that you could own was your apartment; you could buy your apartment. In the case of a big factory where the factory would own the apartment building, when the Soviet Union began to fall apart, many of the factories sold those apartments and so at a time of hyperinflation, you could buy that apartment for $1500, something like that, and anyone who, for whatever reason, had not already bought their apartment would now buy it. And so the homeownership in places like Georgia is probably something like 80 percent and all paid for. No mortgages. In our case in America, it's not that high, and what there is is all mortgaged, but it's different there. So I knew people who couldn't afford electricity to heat their apartment or pay the gas if they had gas heat and basically they'd just huddle in coats and blankets in the winter. It would be like ancient Rome where you had apartment buildings but no utilities or anything and that's the way they lived. But they weren't paying any rent either. It was your apartment, you could live in it, and if you had heat great, but if you didn't, you at least were out of the elements. And that's how they lived.

Q: How did our war in Iraq play there while you were there?

MILES: Well, there was a little concern on the part of the Georgian population and on the part of a few people in the parliament that somehow Iraqi weapons of mass destruction might be used to strike Georgian territory if Georgian territory were being used by Americans to attack Iraq. So there was a little concern about that. That concern abated when it was clear that there were no weapons of mass destruction nor were we interested in using Georgian territory for such purposes. And then the Georgian leadership under Shevardnadze was really quite supportive of our efforts in Iraq and I think that's one of the reasons why he was so embittered when we didn't support him after the fraudulent parliament elections in 2003. He thought somehow he had earned our gratitude and that we weren't repaying it very nicely.

Here are two examples of what they had done to support our efforts. The U.S. government asked all U.S. Embassies around the world, maybe with a few exceptions, to ask the host governments if they would be willing to be included in a list of countries which supported the Coalition in military intervention in Iraq. And in the entire world, as I recall, there were only 30 countries that said, yes, you may include our name in that list of countries. And Georgia was not only one of those countries but Shevardnadze himself wrote a handwritten letter to President Bush, which I thought was very eloquent. I had it translated, of course, but it was quite moving, about the historic role of the United States in the defense of freedom around the world and about the support which the United States

had given Shevardnadze when he had been the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union in the final years of the Soviet Union, and about the support which the United States had given to independent Georgia. It was an amazingly eloquent letter, really, and it was very important because in the entire world only 30 countries had said, yes, you can use our name, and in a couple of nations that consent was given rather grudgingly. Nor was there a handwritten, evocative letter from anyone else, as far as I know.

And the second thing was that when we ended the active combat phase, we asked some countries around the world, not all of them but some of them, if they could provide a small troop contingent to help with security duties and that kind of thing—security, internal security there in Iraq—and the Georgians again said, "Yes. We thank you for the training that you've been giving to our own armed forces and yes, we'll begin to rotate in a small detachment." So the Georgian military involvement started out with a small detachment of, I think, about 70 men and women, and they'd stay for about six months and then they'd rotate back to Georgia. It's now grown to the point where, the last time I checked this, there were 800 men and women serving there in various guard capacities, and Saakashvili, the current president, had promised to go up to 2000. Now, if you take even 800 on a per capita basis, that's a very large contribution. Remember, the entire population of Georgia is around four and a half million. Georgians take pride in this deployment. They feel like they are somehow part of the Western world's effort in this struggle. I am not a fan of the Iraq war but I think you have to say the Georgians have been very supportive. Of course, this is excellent training for the Georgian officers and soldiers as well.

And then the other thing which they did and this took a little more effort including on my part—well, two things. One was, we asked a number of these former communist countries if they would pass appropriate legislation which would exempt our armed forces from being tried by the international tribunal in the case of alleged criminal activity. And we also asked if they would sign a status of forces agreement to cover our military personnel who were in Georgia. And in the case of the exemption from being tried by the Hague Tribunal, an Article 98 exemption I think it was, well, this caused a big fuss in many countries. But in Georgia it didn't cause any fuss at all. It was approved by the parliament with the support of the government and became Georgian legislation.

There was a little difficulty with the status of forces agreement. There was an appropriate committee in their parliament which was under the control of some kind of wacky combination of nationalist and pro-Russia politicians, I'd say, and they were putting up all sorts of difficulties. And so I said, "Look, I would like to come down and talk to your committee. I'm not going to appear as though this is a hearing at which I am testifying, rather I just want to meet with the committee on a semi-formal basis in which I will discuss with you the significance of what we are asking, what the U.S. government is asking you to do, and you can raise your questions with me and I'll try to answer those questions." So I went over to the Parliament with the Defense Attaché and we had a rousing session with these fellows. I did really get quite angry at some of the more obnoxious members of the committee. I remember one of them saying, "Well, when the Russian forces were here in our country"—and they still were in their country—"many of

them were selling weapons and gasoline and so on. How do we know that your American soldiers won't do the same thing?" You know, it was stuff like that and I got really annoyed at that and I said, "Look, you've had Russian soldiers here for the last three hundred years, you had Soviet troops here, you have Russian troops here right now and you've never had any kind of an agreement with them and yet you've been able to handle these kind of difficulties which arise naturally from time to time. Soldiers are soldiers, after all. However, our army is a different kind of an army and that's why I'm asking you to sign this agreement so that we'll have legal measures in place to handle these things. Basically we'll take care of criminal activity on the part of our people and frankly this seldom occurs. We just want a legal understanding with Georgia of how to handle these situations when they do arise. And we have to have such an agreement with you if we are to continue our present level of military cooperation."

In the end, all the members of that committee voted to recommend approval of the status of forces agreement with one exception; the Chairman of the Committee. So Georgia was pretty much on board with our policy in Iraq and also with our training program for their military.

Q: You mentioned the fraudulent election of 2003. How did we see that at the time and what happened?

MILES: That is what brought the Shevardnadze government down, basically. This was the regularly scheduled parliamentary election. I forget the exact term of the parliament, four or five years, and it was time for the parliament to be re-elected. And it's a real parliament; it's not a rubber stamp in Georgia. Well, we felt as the Georgian felt, that the November 2003 parliament election was a rehearsal for the presidential elections in April 2005 and so we wanted to do everything we could to get the Georgian authorities to run an open and honest and decent election. It didn't have to be perfect but it should be something like our own elections, except for Florida I guess, and we really went at it hammer and tongs. We spent a lot of U.S. taxpayer money on this process—I'll give some examples. We set up an election advisory committee of all the ambassadors who were interested in this issue and we included the Russian and the Chinese ambassadors if they wanted to come. The Russian ambassador would come from time to time, never did anything, but he'd attend from time to time. I never saw the Chinese ambassador but he was invited. You know, we wanted to make this a—this wasn't an American thing, in other words. We involved the EC, we involved the UNDP, UN Development Program people there, we had the European Commission representative, we got the British and the others to provide a fair amount of money; we ourselves put up a lot of money through USAID mostly in the form of grants to various non-governmental organizations.

We organized a massive campaign to rectify the voter registration list. In Georgia this had all been done on pretty much a precinct by precinct basis across the whole country, over a million and a half voters. Again, total population of Georgia four and a half million: total voters about 1.5 million, something like that, a little bit more maybe. And the voter lists were all organized on a precinct basis, often on the basis of a handwritten list. So you can imagine there were a lot of dead people on there and, maybe even more important, there

were a lot of people who were not on there who should have been. That list was just a bloody mess and so through USAID we rented a huge, vacant building, like a gymnasium; we filled it up with tables and chairs, computers, of course, and then we hired a small army of young people who would sit and type these lists precinct by precinct into the computer in a way in which you could cross-check names. So you could eliminate duplicate names, not always on the computer but you would see where the duplicate names were and then a human being would go and sort it out with the appropriate local election commission. And these corrected lists were then posted on the internet and were available in written form, available in the election commissions all around the country so that individuals could go and see whether their name was on the list or not or could say, wait a minute, you listed seven people with the same name and there is only one such person living in our village so six names are fraudulent. Or this person is long since dead, his name should be removed. Whatever. So the result was a pretty useable list. That cost over $1 million; I think $1.8 million or something to do all that. Now, I have to confess that, in the end, these lists were often ignored by the various election commissions—they preferred "their" lists which were easy to manipulate. But where you had a more progressive set of local election officials or a certain balance in the local electorate, then the lists were a wonderful asset.

We provided training, which we do in a lot of countries, but we did a lot of it in Georgia. It didn't matter which political party, the government party, the opposition parties, the radical parties—we would provide training for them, for election workers, even for people working in the political campaign. How do you run a political campaign? How do you organize a political rally? And so on. How do you do media? We organized working visits to the United States but we also had U.S. experts coming to Georgia.

We had a leading American expert on exit polls come to Georgia and help set up a professional exit polling system for Georgia so everyone would have a rough count of how the election was looking as the day went on. This proved quite valuable when I had my conversations with Shevardnadze after election day.

Oh my, it just went on and on, anything we could think of that would make this a good election, we would do it. I went around and of course talked to the government people a lot but I also went around and talked to the opposition leaders and even to some of the more corrupt regional members of the government to say, you know, this is very important, we are putting a lot of stock in this, you could lose your reputation in this election or you could make your reputation, depending on how you run the election in your little part of Georgia, whatever. And they would say, yes, we understand, we'll do our best. Now, no one is going to say to the American Ambassador, "No, we're not going to run an honest election. We're going to employ every dirty trick in the world to steal this election. Well, I'm not naïve. I was cutting my teeth on shady election antics back in South Carolina decades ago. But I figured, nothing ventured, nothing gained. I'm going to make sure these fellows know that we'll be watching on Election Day and that, maybe there will be a reckoning depending on how things work out.

Meanwhile, the ambassadorial election committee had been meeting once a week for almost a year and there were subcommittees, by the way, which would meet on more technical issues. For example, there would be a subcommittee of the different countries' representatives who would meet to work on problems of the voter registration list. Another group would work on the issue of training. But the icing on all this huge cake of preparation for the election came because of an impasse in the selection of the members of the Central Election Commission, which was to oversee the whole election process. The CEC had to name members of the regional election commissions and had to certify the results of the election. There was an impasse caused by the inability of the government and the major opposition parties in the parliament to agree on the composition of the Central Election Commission. Certain follow-on steps couldn't be taken until the Commission was formed and we were approaching a point at which the election itself might have to be postponed. That would not have been good. And so in talking to Washington about this we agreed that we needed a hired gun to come out here and bring some sense to this because time was running out and so, very wisely, Washington decided that they would ask Jim Baker to do it. Baker had been the U.S. Secretary of State during the time when Shevardnadze was the Foreign Minister and they had worked very closely together. They knew each other well, they respected each other, they were on a first name basis. Shevardnadze had been to Baker's ranch and Baker had been to Georgia, so on and so on. He was an excellent, even a perfect choice.

Well, he came out with a very small entourage. He met twice with Shevardnadze and twice with the opposition. Baker has got a very good mind and he himself had figured out a compromise on the trip coming over which would get them over the obstacles they themselves had created. Final resolution was reached at an 8 o'clock in the morning meeting on a Sunday which is something that Georgians don't do; they aren't early morning people and damn sure on a Sunday they're not morning people. But anyhow Baker got the opposition members and the government to agree to this compromise. Now when Baker had talked to Shevardnadze he emphasized the importance of having an honest election. Shevardnadze said, and I'll never forget his words—I was sitting right there with Baker and Shevardnadze—and Shevardnadze said, "Well, Jim, in sum, the quality of our relationship with the United States will depend on the quality of these elections?" And Baker said, "Yes, Eduard, that's it, exactly." And that in fact did sum it up.

And off Baker went, having accomplished quite a lot, and we continued our work. Then Election Day came. And actually the first returns on election morning indicated that things were going smoothly but then it got worse during the day and it was clear that the election wasn't going well

Q: Was this anti-Shevardnadze?

MILES: Yes; well, partly. The exit polls showed that the opposition parties were winning the majority of the seats in the parliament, not one opposition party but two or three opposition parties, which all together would have developed a majority in the parliament, and Shevardnadze's government party was coming in third or fourth and so they would

have been relegated to a minority position in the parliament which they controlled up to that point.

Well, the situation got worse during the day and meanwhile there were 600 foreign observers there in a country of four and a half million people; that's a lot of observers. And they issued a scathing report. My own people reported some of the weird things which they had seen. I went out and looked at a few polling places myself; it was just a debacle. I don't know what Shevardnadze was thinking but I was told by one of his own people later, I'd rather not say who, but he was well placed, that Shevardnadze thought this fuss over the election would blow over and that he would be able to get away with this. Well, he couldn't. It was too obvious, too massive, too well documented by the foreign observers and the Georgian observers, too much at odds with the rather scientific exit polling which had been done, and he ran up against a very determined and dedicated and intelligent opposition in the form of Saakashvili, the current President, but also backed up by Nino Burjanadze, the Speaker of the Parliament then and Speaker of the Parliament now, and by Zurab Zhvania, who later became Prime Minister, who had been in the government before and had fallen out with Shevardnadze. And the three of them called for a rally of their supporters down in the main city square of Tbilisi. A lot of people turned out, and to make a long story short they stayed for a month down there during very bad weather; this was already November. Tbilisi has relatively mild winters but it does snow and blow and it can get pretty damn cold and unpleasant. And the people stayed through all that. The organizers were very good at changing the venue slightly, bringing in entertainment, declaring, "Okay, we're going to take a day off. Everybody go home and have a shower and a hot bath if you can and drink some tea and come back the next day and we'll do this again" and so on. And Shevardnadze just wasn't willing to compromise. I know I did and others, I'm sure, suggested various things he could do to recount—

Q: You'd seen him afterwards?

MILES: Yes, sure, immediately.

You could have a recount, you could have a rerun of the whole election, declare the whole thing null and void, rerun the election; you could have a recount in the more corrupt provinces where it was quite clear that the numbers were totally skewed in the wrong way. You could just throw out the results from the provinces where the results were egregiously fraudulent. You could declare—you could rerun the election in just those provinces, you could declare the election in those provinces null and void and just rerun them. However, it quickly became clear that the opposition leaders and the demonstrators on the street were more interested in forcing Shevardnadze's resignation than in correcting the results of the parliamentary election. Now this was not something which Saakashvili or anyone else had ever talked to us about. Saakashvili, in contrast to the other leaders of the opposition, had immediately called for Shevardnadze's resignation. Now, this was a parliamentary election and, logically the Georgians really should have focused on correcting the parliamentary election and worried about the presidency later, because after all the presidential election was set for April 2005—only a

year and a half away. But Saakashvili saw the moment and in an astute, if demagogic, political move, began immediately to call for Shevardnadze's resignation. It's interesting to note that the other opposition leaders didn't themselves echo this demand. In fact, for them, the whole exercise became something of a tar baby. Neither Burjanadze nor Zhvania had planned to appear continuously at the demonstrations downtown. They wouldn't discourage their followers from attending the demonstrations but they, themselves, would take a step back from them by not appearing at every opportunity. But they simply couldn't break away—the demonstrations were simply too big and too enduring—so they began to reappear more frequently than they had planned.

I should mention for the historical record that several of the major opposition parties stayed away from the demonstrations: the Labor Party, the New Rights Party and the Industrialists Party all boycotted the demonstrations.

Well, people were already fed up with the Shevardnadze administration. They were unhappy over the poor collection of revenues, the abysmal state of the infrastructure, the failure to pay salaries and pensions and the increase in crime and corruption, and they responded to Saakashvili's repeated demand for Shevardnadze's resignation and so there began to be increasing pressure on Shevardnadze, not just to rectify the election but to resign. And we ambassadors talked to him about various possibilities, but he was simply unwilling to admit that the election had been flawed, let alone to talk about steps to make it right. I really believe that a compromise could have been found rather easily but Shevardnadze's intransigence only fed the anger of the mob.

Well, all during this considerable Sturm und Drang, violence was avoided and if I did one thing during that post-election period, it was to try my best to keep both the government people, especially those who had authority over men with guns, and the opposition leaders committed to non-violent measures and counter-measures. And I spoke to everybody from the President on down; I spoke to the ministers of internal affairs and of defense, to the leaders of the intelligence organizations and to the various SWAT team types; the head of the internal troops, the President's protective detail, whatever. I spent hours talking to them about what was going on and an almost equal number of hours talking to the leaders of the demonstrations about the importance of keeping down hooliganism. I would say, "You don't need a lot of broken windows; you don't want police cars overturned and burned and that kind of thing. This wouldn't look good on television"—and, by then, all the international print and TV media was represented in Tbilisi. And, in the end it was quite non-violent, quite bloodless.

Q: Is this the so-called Rose Revolution?

MILES: Yes, this was the Rose Revolution. It was a major political development and all achieved bloodlessly.

Q: Why roses?

MILES: It was a kind of a gimmick, actually the idea of Mark Mullen, of the National Democratic Institute. I expect he was as surprised as anyone to see the way in which this became the symbol of the democratic movement in Georgia. But it was designed to demonstrate the non-violent nature of the opposition. Amazing, the over-sized role such gestures can assume. In the last days just before Shevardnadze resigned, the opposition leaders called on their supporters to march on the parliament building. Shevardnadze had decided to open the parliament based on the fraudulent returns. Predictably, the opposition declared this an illegitimate parliament, refused to attend the session and had then marched on the parliament in a demonstrative way, carrying roses as a symbol of non-violence—you know, "We're not carrying guns, we're not carrying clubs, we are carrying roses." There were rings of uniformed police and internal troops around the parliament building and with corresponding levels of weaponry. So you first would have policemen with linked arms and then you'd have policemen with shields, plastic shields, and then you'd have policemen with clubs and batons and then you'd have guys with guns. And as the opposition leaders approached the parliament, and Shevardnadze was already in there speaking, the ranks of the uniformed policemen opened like Moses parting the Red Sea and the demonstrators poured into the parliament building waving their red roses and declaring that this is an illegal parliament and people should disperse and go home. And Shevardnadze was—

Q: This is tape 11, side one, with Dick Miles. Yes.

MILES: Shevardnadze was hustled out by his security guards, Saakashvili took the podium, the rostrum, and ceremoniously drank the tea out of Shevardnadze's glass that had been left sitting there on the rostrum and declared that the people have taken power, or whatever, and then everybody went home. They actually stayed around the building for a while but basically they went home.

Then began a peculiar round of "non-talk" between Burjanadze and Zhvania and Shevardnadze about what to do now. Saakashvili had refused to meet with Shevardnadze anymore because he felt Shevardnadze was living in some kind of political Never Never Land and wasn't being realistic and, in turn, Shevardnadze refused to meet with Saakashvili because he felt he wasn't being respectful enough and was rude and impertinent. And they both were right, of course, but still life has to go on.

I had been meeting with Avtandil Jorbenadze, the State Minister, something like a Prime Minister, and I remember the last time we met. He was in one of the rooms of the President's Office Building in the Presidential Compound. Due to the demonstrations, the President and his people could no longer use the Presidential Offices in downtown Tbilisi. Shevardnadze was not available, and Jorbenadze asked me what was going on in the talks between the opposition leaders and Shevardnadze. I thought it was a peculiar thing; here is the number two person in the Georgian government asking me what's going on, and I said, "Well, you know, you're up here where the meetings are going on; I'm down there in the Embassy. So, I'm asking *you* what's going on." And Jorbenadze said he had no idea. And about that time Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov decided that he'd come to Tbilisi to see what he could do to help sort things out. The Russian Ambassador

and I arranged for Secretary Powell to call Ivanov at the airport as he landed. The Secretary used some talking points that we had provided, suggesting things that might be helpful in this situation, noting that the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church had been a very useful player in this process, trying to keep the situation non-violent. The Patriarch had to mediate and had offered the venue of the Patriarchate. If Shevardnadze and Saakashvili couldn't meet at the President's office, maybe they could meet at the Patriarchate. The Secretary told Ivanov that if he needed any help from the American Embassy, he should just let the Ambassador know and we would be perfectly happy to help. It was quite a friendly gesture, I thought, and I think it was taken in that way by the Russians although they then totally ignored it.

Ivanov was able to convince Saakashvili to join in a meeting with Shevardnadze. And when the three opposition leaders went in to see Shevardnadze, Ivanov went to go in with them and the opposition leaders said this is a Georgian affair now; we thank you for bringing us all together but we won't need you in this meeting. That was really a great Georgian put down.

Ivanov then flew off to Adjara, the autonomous province of Georgia on the southern Black Sea coast run by a little tin pot despot down there named Abashidze. It's important only because that's where Batumi is, the historic oil port where a lot of the Caspian Sea oil has historically arrived, and still arrives, by rail and is then pumped into tankers bound mostly for Mediterranean markets. Abashidze had turned Adjara into his personal fiefdom and he was very close to the Russians. So Ivanov flew down to brief Abashidze about what was going on and while he was down there the news came that Shevardnadze had announced his resignation. Now we all thought that that was an increasing possibility but I don't think that any of the foreign diplomats, much less Ivanov, thought that was going to happen at that moment and so we were all taken by surprise.

That evening, as usual for the past month, there were tens of thousands of people out in the streets of Tbilisi. This was late at night; I was at the Embassy with the team, and you began to hear this roar. We were close enough to where the people were to hear the roar of the crowd and at the same time they were broadcasting the news on the TV and on the radio and simultaneously, and I don't know what insightful civil servant had thought about this, but fireworks broke out. I mean, I'm talking about the kind of big fireworks that you have on the mall here on the Fourth of July. So some guy in the parks department had somehow managed to get his hands on some very serious fireworks and the instant that resignation was announced, poom, off into the air went these fireworks. It was a pretty amazing thing, really.

Q: Well then, you left there in 2005?

MILES: August of 2005.

Q: How did it play out? How did—?

MILES: Well, we were very supportive of the new government. In accord with Georgian law, an interim government was formed with an acting President. The troika, Zhvania, Saakashvili and Burjanadze, met and had agreed that Burjanadze would become the acting President. Nino Burjanadze is the woman who had been the Speaker of the former parliament and who is the Speaker of the present parliament. So she would become the acting President during a 45 day period; Saakashvili would become the opposition's candidate for President in a special election. When I say "opposition", remember that several of the major opposition parties hadn't joined the demonstrations against the election results. They didn't like the election results either and they also didn't like the way Shevardnadze had allowed the governmental institutions to wither way. But they had a visceral dislike and mistrust of Saakashvili so they remained aloof.

But anyhow, the troika declared that there would be a unified candidate and that would be Saakashvili for President in 45 days according to Georgia law. Burjanadze told me at that time that she thought that either she or Zhvania would make the better president but that the political moment belonged to Saakashvili and they were not in a position to deny the office to him. And so that was done; it was a reasonably honest election, I think. It was by popular acclaim almost. Everyone wanted to get on the band wagon. Even Saakashvili joked about the results. They were so high, he said, that they could only go down, not up. The new government immediately asked us for support. I got a call from Zhvania the day after the election, saying, we've looked in the government treasury and it's empty and so we need immediate assistance to help pay policemen's salaries and that kind of thing, to simply run the government. I said we'll do what we can to help and then I passed this on to Washington immediately. Because Georgia is a small country one didn't need a whole lot of money to do this and Washington basically scratched the bottom of the various assistance barrels for every penny they could get their hands on and they came up with—I don't remember the exact figure, but it was like $21 or 22 million of assistance and much of that is what they call bridging assistance, which is basically cash that you give to a foreign government. The U.S. Congress hates that. They don't mind giving assistance but they want it in the form of a program in which you hire an American NGO to do this or that and the money all goes there; it doesn't go straight into the pockets of the government to balance its budget or pay civil servant salaries or whatever. But because of the emergency situation the Congressional leadership agreed we could do this. So the package was made up of everything from little bits of DOD money to little bits of AID reprogramming to little bits of the exchange program; I mean, everything they could possibly pull together they did. And it was enough to help the government to survive that first 90 day period, let's say. It was very useful, I think.

And then after that, because the government immediately embarked on a serious reform program, and I'm not saying they did that perfectly and maybe next time we can discuss a little bit more about that, but it was so vastly superior to what the Shevardnadze government had done that there was no question that we would support these efforts and would be very helpful to them in the process. So we began doing things that we would not have dreamed of doing before with Shevardnadze. Because the police were so incredibly corrupt and incompetent we had never provided any kind of police training to

them of any sort. We pretty quickly began providing training to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Q: Well, I think we can stop at this point.

MILES: Yes, and then we'll start with the new Saakashvili Government.

Q: We'll start with the new thing.

One question too I wanted to ask while we're—during these efforts that were being made of people coming in looking at the election and all, was there U.S. congressional representation, people coming there to take a look at it?

MILES: We had lots and lots of CODELs [Congressional Delegations] during the whole time I was there. I don't think I've ever had so many CODELs in such a short period.

Q: Was the OSCE a player?

MILES: Yes, ODIHR [Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights] was heavily involved. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems [IFES] was also very active in Georgia.

Q: Okay. So we'll pick this up next time at—how do you pronounce the name?

MILES: Saakashvili. Don't feel bad if you can't do it.

Q: I can't do it, because the problem is you end up by coming up with our army chief of staff.

MILES: Yes, that's right; that's right. Shalikashvili. Also of Georgian descent.

Q: Yes.

Okay. Today is the 25th of July, 2007. Dick, so we're really talking about the Rose Revolution or what was it called?

MILES: The Rose Revolution, yes.

Q: So what happened when that happened? I mean, we may be duplicating it but I can't remember—I take it our response was that we were delighted this happened?

MILES: I think we would just as soon have seen Shevardnadze continue until the end of his second term, which would have been April of 2005 but only if he would finally get off the dime and institute some of the reforms to deal with issues that absolutely were crying out for resolution, like raising the taxes, I mean gathering the taxes, paying the

salaries, paying the pensions, beginning to repair the infrastructure and ending some of the corruption. But frankly there wasn't a whole lot of chance of that.

Q: Were we looking at it—was this a medical problem do you think?

MILES: I think, having talked to people who know him better than I and who have spent years working with him, that the second assassination attempt against him, which occurred shortly before I arrived there, took an enormous toll on him, both physically and psychically.

Q: Was he hit?

MILES: It was an explosion underneath his armored car. I saw pictures of the armored car, it was just—it was an armored Mercedes, which is a good armored car—and it just looked like a twisted mangled mass of metal. It was hard to believe that anyone could have survived that blast, armored car or no armored car. And I saw pictures of him also that were taken in his torn tee shirt with blood on his body and on his face and he looked shocked then, as anybody would be. People tell me that before he had been reasonably aggressive in pursuing his policies and I think he was something of a democrat at heart, certainly not a tyrant or a despot. There were some of those around in Georgia, but I don't think Shevardnadze was one. I think he was a small-D democrat and wanted to bring Georgia into the 21st century but he didn't really know how to do it. And then when the assassination attempt occurred, I think he lost the will and even the ability to do it. And his wife, to whom he was devoted, always had the reputation of nagging him to do more for the family, which is a Georgian tradition; it's not considered really corruption in their society. You know, if you can do it, you make sure that Cousin Georgi has got a good job and that your Uncle Irakli is taken care of and so on. It's just what you do in Georgia. It's almost a requirement. After the assassination attempt, maybe with an eye to his own mortality, Shevardnadze began to pay more attention to the welfare of his family than he had in the past and so a certain degree of corruption began to set in at the top and began to be widespread throughout the country.

I don't believe there was any aggrandizement on his part personally. I never had the impression that he was particularly motivated by or even very much interested in luxury or money. But the corruption certainly involved family members and relatives and that would have been all right in Georgia; I think people would have even accepted it as sort of normal under Georgian circumstances if, repeat if, the government had been actively trying to improve the lives of the people, trying to pay the pensions, raise the employment level, trying to reform the society; but it wasn't doing any of those things. It sounds like a simple thing to say that there's electricity for only three hours a day, but remember, without electricity, the water isn't pumped to the upper floors of apartment buildings so you can only cook, wash or flush the toilet with water you have stored, and if you've forgotten to store it, you're out of luck. Virtually all the services that we've come to expect, at least in an urban environment, had ceased to function normally in Georgia in 2003. People really were fed up, and so when the flawed election occurred in November 2003—and there is no question but that it was flawed—the opposition, led by

Saakashvili, began immediately calling for not just a rectification of the wrongs committed during the election but for Shevardnadze's resignation. It was a rather bold political move and one might say it was just hyperbole and rhetoric but I don't think it was ever just rhetoric to Saakashvili and the people, because they were so fed up with the lack of activity and organizational ability on the part of the government. The constant and continued corruption was piling up minor and major irritations every day; traffic police were notorious for the bribe taking and to get anything at all done, to get the necessary permits and all that, you had to pay innumerable tiny, tiny bribes—only a dollar maybe, but it was a dollar every time you turned around and everyone knew that that sixty cents of that dollar went into the pocket of the bribe taker while the other forty cents was passed up for his bosses to take their share. People were just fed up with it and so they responded to Saakashvili's sloganeering and, in the end, they not only didn't go away from the demonstrations but their numbers even grew, and Shevardnadze's rather feeble efforts to rally his own supporters, so few as they were, but anyhow to rally them, didn't take hold either, and so in the end he decided the best thing was to resign and I think that he was wise to do so.

By that point we weren't sorry to see him go but it was certainly never our intent that he go and it wasn't one of our policy goals that he go. Our goal was to have a decent, honest election for the parliament in November of 2003 and we expended a lot of time, effort and money to bring that about. Not just we—I say we, I mean the international community—but we certainly did use a lot of U.S. taxpayer money to try to bring it about. We saw the parliamentary elections as a rehearsal for the all-important presidential election which would take place in the spring of 2005. So that's what we wanted to do. But in the end, and I know this is a very long answer to your short question, I think we weren't displeased with the change of government despite the messiness of the process.

Q: Alright. When the new government came in, this was when?

MILES: Well, it came in in December/January of 2004. The parliament election was in November of 2003; there was a hiatus while the protestors were on the street and Shevardnadze then resigned. I don't recall exactly but I think it was in December—either late November or early December of 2003. And then, by Georgian law, and they actually did this pretty well I'd say, by Georgian law under unusual circumstances of that sort an interim president is appointed for a short period and then a special presidential election is held to fill the office of the president. The interim government had to tidy up the results of the flawed parliamentary election as well. So the three primary leaders of the opposition organizations, that is, Nino Burjanadze, who had been Speaker of the parliament, Zurab Zhvania, and Saakashvili formed a kind of a troika, a working troika, and they decided among themselves, probably wisely, that Nino Burjanadze would become the interim President and they would propose Saakashvili as their sole candidate in the special presidential election that would be held at the end of the interim period. There were a couple of other almost throwaway presidential candidates from other organizations or individuals who just wanted to run for president but it was quite clear that Saakashvili had the popular mood and the popular vote in his hand and indeed he won overwhelmingly when the election was actually held.

During the period of the interim government we had sent out Deputy Assistant Secretary Pascoe with an interagency group from Washington to see what the immediate needs of the Georgian government might be and to try to meet those needs. In the evening of the first day when the interim government took over from Shevardnadze, I was called by Zurab Zhvania and told that the coffers of the state were virtually empty and they needed immediate financial support. Now, I sent that request off to Washington and I was told to tell the new authorities that we would be helpful. We didn't know exactly how much we could provide; we would have to sort that out. We would first assess their immediate needs and then we'd do what we could on an emergency basis. So a team was hastily assembled in Washington, held a couple of meetings there to determine what might be done and then came out to Georgia. In the end we were able to come up with, I believe it was in the neighborhood of $21 million of bridging assistance and much of that was direct budget support, which, of course, is usually just anathema to the U.S. Congress. But consultations were held with the appropriate congressional leaders and they understood the special circumstances and so they didn't have any problem with our doing what we were doing. And that meant a considerable infusion of money for the Georgian government to simply pay the back pensions, pay the police salaries, pay the army salaries; provide just a modicum of money to various state institutions so they could simply function. And then there were some Agency for International Development programs which were already in the works. These programs were strengthened and accelerated. Anyhow, all that made a package of about $21 million which they didn't have before and I think that really was a big morale boost for them and gave them a little breathing space.

One of the things that Saakashvili did rather quickly—he had a number of good ideas—when he became President was to develop a special fund to pay senior executive and parliamentary deputy salaries. He obtained a considerable amount of money, in the neighborhood of $1 million from George Soros personally and another million, it was not quite a million but roughly another million, from the United Nations Development Program for this purpose. Already in Georgia there was a program in existence which paid an extra salary to the judges to try to get at the corruption problem. The judges were getting $400 or $500 a month. The Georgians had also, even prior to this, been paying the troops that were being trained by the Americans $400 or $500 a month. Four hundred to five hundred a month was a very good wage in Georgia at that time—probably still is a good wage by many people's standards in Georgia. But after the development of the UNDP and the Soros Fund, Saakashvili, the Prime Minister, the members of the cabinet, basically, received salaries of $1000 or $1200 a month and the key people in the organs of power—that is, the police, the SWAT team-type people, the secret police, the military—they were beginning to be paid a certain amount of decent money as well. And then when the government actually began to take hold and revenues began to flow in because Saakashvili and company made it very clear that they expected these taxes to be paid—they were not onerous taxes particularly but no one had been paying them because the government hadn't been carrying out its enforcement policy—so he made it very clear that the laws would be now be enforced and money began to flow in. And very quickly the new government paid the back pensions and the back salaries of the civil servants and

then began to do some infrastructure repair work as well. So all and all the new government got off to a rousing start. And I think it was mostly their own drive and determination that did it but also it was aided considerably by that initial $21 million that we gave them.

Q: Well then, were we playing any role other than supplying this money once they got on the—you know, the new government came in and they were going to reform things, what were we doing?

MILES: We did two basic things. First of all, Secretary Powell, who was then Secretary of State, came out for the inauguration and had good conversations with the leadership including Saakashvili. Powell promised to do what we could to help—as long as they continued on a genuine reform path, we would make a good faith effort to try to help support them. So that message was well received.

Second, we already were doing the GTEP military training and so we continued that. We hadn't done police training before because the police were so corrupt that it just would not have been practical to try to do it and maybe not even permissible under American regulations. You know, we control the assistance to the police maybe a little more strictly than we do other forms of assistance and rightly so. But one of the things that Saakashvili did early on with the police became one of the most popular moves that he ever instituted. In Georgia the traffic police had gotten completely out of control. I mentioned they were notorious for taking bribes. Make that a "Notorious" with a capital "N". I mean, you could hardly drive a kilometer in Georgia anywhere without being pulled over and being subject to some silly bribe of a dollar or whatever. It was almost like feudal Europe where you couldn't go 10 kilometers without paying someone to lift the toll gate to let traffic through. It was just awful and people were just fed up with it. I remember speaking to the Director of the Tbilisi Symphony Orchestra. He had just driven his Mercedes back to Tbilisi from the coast, a distance of no more than 200 miles, and had been pulled over constantly. In the end, he had paid almost $200 in petty bribes during that short trip.

Well, Saakashvili first tried to talk to the leadership in the traffic police—they are a separate branch from the ordinary police and they are a nationwide service—and tell them that they had to reform, that he would pay the traffic police officers adequate salaries but that that they had to stop taking bribes. To make a long story short, he worked with them repeatedly on this issue but none of it worked. So, within a pretty short timeframe, he sacked the entire lot. I mean, he sacked, I think the number was about 6000 traffic police, and he didn't hire more than five or six people back from the old traffic police. Now this was a big shock in Georgian society because people simply don't get fired in these former communist places. I mean, it just isn't done. And people in Georgia who have very close family ties and connections, you know, for that to happen was a big shock. But it was a very popular move with the public. And Saakashvili not only did that but he raised the salaries of the traffic police, he gave them new uniforms, new weapons, new equipment, new radios and new VW Passat police cars and he put up Georgian and English billboards around the country saying if you believe you have been unduly

harassed by the traffic police, please call this number. It was the equivalent of a 1-800 number and there was somebody at the other end to answer it. Well, that was an amazingly popular act.

And so with that and other things which the new government did, we began to provide a fair amount of assistance to the police. We provided I think about four and a half million dollars to help rehab their police academy, which was in God awful condition, I mean unbelievable. You know, rooms where even the parquet on the floors had been stripped up and sold off to light fires for barbecue or whatever; windows totally taken out of their frames, I mean even the frame missing, just a hole in the wall; just ghastly. Well, we provided four and a half million dollars to do everything from a little bit of rehabilitation of the building to actually training the instructors and buying some audiovisual equipment and that kind of a thing. The French did a bit of that also. And we brought over—through INL, the bureau in the State Department that deals with law enforcement cooperation—experts, retired police people basically, who oversaw this and who also taught some classes at the academy. And that was just one of the things that we did which we hadn't been doing before.

The other thing which took a little longer—and I don't recall the exact timeline on this; I'd have to go back and check it—but you're familiar with the Millennium Challenge program in which democratically inclined countries which are below a certain poverty level can become eligible to work with us to develop a special long-term assistance program, a new program of economic assistance, which once agreed upon provides multi-year money rather than the traditional USAID year-by-year funding. The Millennium Challenge Corporation provides money over a period of three to five years and the money is given to the host government to carry out the program rather than to American contract organizations as is the case with USAID. We, of course, audit the MCC operation in country, it is taxpayer money after all, so we audit it. We work with the host government to develop an agreed program and we make sure that they continue to meet the criteria. But basically the money for the multi-year program becomes the money of the host government. It's their money to carry out their programs which they had proposed rather than the usual way we do assistance which is to maybe coordinate with them, maybe not, but to set up programs which we think would be helpful and which are usually carried out by American partner organizations. So MCC represents quite a difference in our way of doing business. The Georgians did qualify for the Millennium Challenge program and as a result they signed what is called a compact. They signed a compact, the terms of which would provide them several hundred million dollars over a multi-year period and in theory, we were told, that was supposed to be in addition to the ordinary economic and military assistance programs. Well, you know what happened; you've been around the government. As was inevitable, the U.S. economic assistance funding did decline in Georgia after they signed on to the Millennium Challenge program although it wasn't supposed to. I was really annoyed at that but in a way it was predictable. But we still do have a separate economic assistance program for Georgia and of course we've continued the military training program for Georgia.

Q: Well now, what about some other governments? I'm thinking particularly Germany, France, England, and the United Kingdom. What sort of role were they doing?

MILES: Well, they were helpful. The UNDP was helpful. The European Commission was helpful; they had a representation in Georgia. The problem with the other donor countries and organizations, maybe especially with the EC, is that they are very slow in providing the assistance, very slow in coming up with new programs, very slow in providing money even for existing programs much less new ones. But they did; they did help. The Japanese funded some programs separately. The Germans did; they were quite good about it actually. I mentioned the reform of the traffic police and the new cars that were provided. Saakashvili got the Germans to provide those cars and several hundred more for the regular police. The Dutch provided some assistance; they also were very good about this. Of course, Saakashvili's wife is Dutch which certainly helped in that regard. She's a very energetic and competent lady by the way. Sharon and I liked her a lot. Nothing from Russia. I used to tease my Russian colleague about that and the answer, which was very carefully thought out in Moscow was, well, we have about one million ethnic Georgians in Russia and they send remittances back to Georgia and that is a form of assistance. Well, really. On the basis of that logic we could simply end our assistance programs to most of the countries in the world.

Q: On the Russian factor, were the Russians messing around there while you were there? We're talking after the revolution. Were they seeing this as a target of opportunity or what were they up to?

MILES: They were as surprised as we were at Shevardnadze's resignation and they missed their opportunity, although it was a very small opportunity, to develop a good relationship with the new government under Saakashvili. They really had had an extraordinarily bad relationship with Shevardnadze. There was some residual unease on the Russian part dating back to Soviet times when, as the Soviet Foreign Minister, he had been instrumental in helping to bring the Soviet Western Group of Forces back from Germany peacefully and to dismantle the Soviet Union and so on. Shevardnadze wasn't a popular person in Russia almost entirely because of that history and that has carried over, unfortunately, to the new leadership in Russia. And the Russians of course had put a lot of pressure on the Georgians over the safe haven for the Chechen fighters in the Pankisi Gorge. So the Russians had a low opinion of Shevardnadze and relations between the two countries were somewhat strained.

But, having said that, there was no intrinsic reason why they couldn't have cozied up to the new government quickly, provided some symbolic economic or military assistance if nothing else and announced that a leaf had been turned in the book of history and that this was a time when we Russians and Georgians should work together to try to improve the relationship. That's what I would have done if I were in a position of influence in Russia, but they didn't do that. They remained quite aloof. They had had a supportive relationship with the Abkhaz separatists. They would probably deny that but I think it's objective reality to say that. They had been perhaps less supportive of the separatists in South Ossetia but the Georgian perception was that they were supportive of the

separatists and the Russians could easily have taken steps to change that perception. But they didn't do that either.

And then they had—again, it was more a perception than reality—a rather close relationship with this little despot down in Adjara, Aslan Abashidze. Adjara is an interesting place. It has traditionally enjoyed an autonomous status within Georgia dating back to the 1920s and dating from the Treaty of Kars between the Soviet Union and Turkey. And the little dictator down there—despot would be perhaps a better word because it's such a small place—Abashidze, tried to keep a cozy relationship with the Russians, particularly with Mayor Luzhkov in Moscow, but also with others. And of course Batumi, the capital of Adjara, has a certain revenue of its own because of the Caspian oil that comes over from Azerbaijan by rail and then is shipped out on tankers. And so Abashidze had a bit of money at his disposal as well. He had long since stopped sending any tax money to Tbilisi, since, as he told me, no money ever came back from Tbilisi. In fact, he claimed that he had to pay the salaries of the Georgian government bureaucrats in Adjara since Tbilisi wasn't capable of paying them. I believed him.

When Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov had been disinvited from the negotiation sessions—which he had brokered—between Shevardnadze and the opposition in the last day or so of the Shevardnadze government, he, Ivanov, flew down to Batumi to consult with Abashidze. Well, to everyone's surprise, Shevardnadze abruptly resigned and that left Ivanov stranded down in Batumi with his buddy, Abashidze. Ivanov didn't return to Tbilisi but flew directly back to Moscow.

Then the question arose of whether or not the Adjarians were going to participate in the special presidential election. I went down several times to try to convince Abashidze that there was a new breeze blowing in Tbilisi, that we were supportive of this new government and that he needed to mend his fences with Tbilisi the way he had never quite been able to do with Shevardnadze. He would listen to me; we were on good personal terms. He was a very intelligent man, a very small man but with an ego as big as a house. I mean, I don't want to bore you and the readers with all this—they can read my book later maybe—but I have never seen anyone with quite such an ego except maybe Saakashvili himself.

Q: Can you give a feel for how this was apparent?

MILES: Well, dinners at his residence would last, if you can believe this, five, six, seven hours, and during most of this time you would be subjected to a monologue on his part, basically, where he would talk about the great things that he had done, was doing and would do for the people. Then he would have an aide come in and would show movies on a big widescreen television of some of these great things. He was especially proud of a children's opera company in which Italian opera stars and others would participate and the children of Adjara would present these full-length operas with enormously rich costumes and full orchestra and so on, and this would be all attributed to him, and indeed it should have been. I mean, a children's opera on this scale wouldn't have existed anywhere on earth without someone putting the money out. Not only that but all this

would then be broadcast all around the world over the satellite television station that he maintained with transmitters in Rome. All this was just incredible from this little tiny, rather poor place.

I'll give you an example of his psychology. The dinner would reach about 10 or 11 o'clock at night and—I tend to go to bed early—I'd be nodding my head at that point or trying to stay awake. Abashidze would bring in his grandson, a sweet little boy, angelic, maybe four or five years old, and he would sit the little boy on his knee, and his mother's sitting there, of course, the little boy's mother, and Abashidze would say, "So, tell everybody how much you love your mother." And the little boy would gesture with his hands like a fisherman describing the one who got away—his hands would be about a foot apart. And then Abashidze would say, "Now, tell everybody how much you love your grandpa. And his hands would be about two feet apart." I thought that was just disgusting, quite frankly.

I remember at one point during one of these interminable dinners saying, "Well, this is fine, but we have a full program tomorrow and so it's time to go." Sharon was with me on that occasion. And he said, "It's not time to go. I am the host and I am not done talking." And I said, "Well"—by now it was past midnight—and I said, "Well, actually, I'm done listening and so it's time to go. We're going to go now." I stood up and he brought in this enormous dog. They have a special breed of dog down there, a Caucasian wolfhound, I think they call it. Looks kind of like a big burly bear and weighs probably about 125-130 pounds. And the handler, who was a kind of a wrestler type with heavy gloves had the dog on a chain and was kind of holding him back, and honest to God he deliberately moved that dog between us and the door. Then Abashidze took a plate of raw steaks—each one maybe half a pound—and tossed them to the dog, one at a time—snarf, smack, gulp—the steaks were gone. I could picture my arm or leg going down that same gullet. So there I was, the plenipotentiary American Ambassador, stymied by this fierce dog. Somehow this was not covered in the Ambassador Training Course at FSI.

Q: While you were there how did this play out with him?

MILES: Well, he listened. He was intelligent and well educated. He was from an old Adjara family, actually. Anyhow, he listened and he did go along with the election participation—very grudgingly. He made a very grudging concession on that, which was good, but it was just too big a jump for him to give up the cozy, autonomous, virtually independent existence which he had enjoyed down there. He was like the king of a Greek city-state—and shift to what, in essence, would be the appointed governor of Adjara or the appointed mayor of Batumi, a little town of about 120,000 or something, and would have to send the government revenue to Tbilisi and all that. He and Shevardnadze had never quite agreed on the revenue flows and so while he acknowledged that he was supposed to pay a share of the revenue to Tbilisi, he had announced, publicly, that since Tbilisi was not capable of providing the services which the federal government should provide and he was actually providing them, that he was no longer going to send money to Tbilisi. In a sense this was understandable but he should have changed his tune when the new government came in and he refused to change his tune.

So actually there was—by this time Saakashvili was now inaugurated in office—there was something of a military confrontation at the administrative border between Georgia proper and Adjara. I went down several times to what amounted to the command post that Saakashvili and the Ministry of the Interior had set up near the border to try, first to find out what was going on and second, to encourage a non-violent approach. A motley crowd of very excited and undisciplined young men gathered on both sides of the administrative border and there was some low tech military equipment on both sides as well; Abashidze had purchased some military equipment. It was small scale stuff, but you could kill people with it; and, indeed, shots were fired. Happily, no one, to the best of my knowledge, actually died during this confrontation but the situation was building up and came to a peak when one of Abashidze's "military" types blew the little bridge on the road leading down the coast to Batumi. At that point Saakashvili decided to push his force, such as it was, on through the border and on down to Batumi. Abashidze, who had been in touch with his Russian friends, got them to send a plane in for him and he then flew out, in a sense was evacuated with his family to Moscow where he remains to this day. I spoke to Abashidze on the phone on the evening he left. Abashidze was arrogant as I have indicated but, usually, he was a very polite man. He was a very dapper man, always dressed immaculately, looked like he had just stepped out of a fashion catalog or something, and he was always very polite to me. I mentioned his aggressive hospitality but even then he was polite, and when I called him on that final evening the conversation was rather sad. I said, "How are things going?" and he said, "Not so well." I said, "At a time like this you have to think about your role in history and your legacy and you don't want to do things that are going to cause bloodshed. The times have changed now, you need to think about that." And he said, "Well, times have certainly changed." And then I kept talking along those lines until I realized he had wandered away; the phone was still live, it was a live connection, but he just was in a bit of a daze and never said even good-bye, never continued the conversation, and I had no further connection with him after that. I have been back to Moscow several times subsequently but I didn't want to bother looking him up.

Q: Was Baku sort of reintegrated into Georgia in a way?

MILES: You mean Batumi.

Q: Batumi, I mean.

MILES: Yes, almost immediately. Abashidze fled the province. The new government quickly did away with the autonomous status of Adjara, which I think was not a wise thing to do because the Abkhaz looked at that and said, well, they were offering us in Abkhazia autonomy and we see what autonomy means to the present leadership. So, in my opinion, this was not a smart move. But Saakashvili wanted to—I think he wanted to demonstrate that he and his government were definitely in charge. Patience is not one of Saakashvili's virtues

Q: Excuse me.

MILES: He wanted to demonstrate that he and his government were certainly in charge of things Georgian and that this autonomy business was just not going to stand. And so he put his own people in office. My son Richard actually went down to Adjara for a while. Richard is now a police officer in Virginia, but he was doing private security work at that time. He had come to Georgia several times to visit us and had spent some time with the Georgian police. When the new Minister of the Interior sent his deputy, David Glonti, down to Adjara to be the so-called Minister of Internal Affairs in Adjara, I said to David, if you want my son Richard to come and just give you advice, just to look around, see how things are going, let me know. And so he took me up on this offer and my son spent a fascinating four or five weeks down in Adjara. David gave him a letter with stamps and seals and all that on it, which said basically something like, "This is Richard Miles. He is acting as Inspector General on my behalf. Please show him whatever he asks to see." Richard would go into these police stations and the police were still operating as they had in the old Soviet Union—you know, you don't reform organizations overnight—and through the interpreter or with his own Russian, Richard would say I'm here from the Minister's office and I'd like you to tell me what you have been doing for training, how often do the officers practice their marksmanship, or how many people are on the force here, or where is everybody—the station appears to be empty here this morning, where is everybody—what's going on, that kind of a thing. And they would be dismissive and then he would show them the letter and all of a sudden there were heels clicking and ties being straightened; quite a different situation indeed. And he was able to report back to David, I think, very nicely, that you've got a real problem on your hands here in Adjara; they have been basically a private police force reporting to Mr. Abashidze for years and good luck with your reform because these guys don't have a clue. And in essence they had been lying to the new Ministry officials who were down there trying to make sense out of all this. They were saying that they did a certain amount of training, that they fired a certain number of rounds at the firing range, that they were doing so many miles of patrol and all that and, you know, my son has been around, he was able to ferret out these lies pretty quickly. So he performed a very useful purpose and at no cost to anybody. I paid—well, except to me—I paid his way over to Georgia and back but he didn't get any salary or anything from anybody.

Q: Well, you were there when the new administration came in in 2004.

MILES: Yes.

Q: When did you leave?

MILES: August of 2005. So my time was almost divided equally; I was there three years and three months. My time was divided almost equally between Shevardnadze and Saakashvili.

Q: How did you see the new administration, the problem of corruption? Because this of course is the Achilles heel of all new governments everywhere. I mean, we've talked about the traffic police but how about other elements?

MILES: The word went out quickly that the previous level of corruption was no longer condoned and that no corruption would be permitted, but the emphasis really was on the petty corruption that interrupted people's lives and annoyed them and also on the corruption at the top of the Shevardnadze regime. I think the leadership was wise enough to know that there is a level of corruption in every society and maybe even more so in Georgia where these family relationships and personal relationships mean so much. In Georgia, you do a favor for someone, he does a favor for you and sometimes gifts are exchanged, sometimes money is exchanged. Some of these things would be considered corrupt in our society but not necessarily so in theirs, so a little bit of this continued and was tolerated. But it was quite clear that major levels of corruption were to stop, and the government demonstrated that almost too vigorously. For example, they went after a number of Shevardnadze's associates and relatives in a way which resembled a vendetta. On one occasion, a former official was stopped in his car, pulled out by guys in black ski masks and hauled off to jail. This was shown on television.

They put Shevardnadze's son-in-law, Gia Jokhtaberidze, in prison. Because of the son-in-law's relationship to the Shevardnadze family, he had been allowed to become the 51 percent shareholder in MagtiCom, the major telecommunications company in Georgia; the other 49 percent being held by an American company. He was put in prison and he was told, basically, "You don't deserve the position in which you were placed. You have taken money which belongs to the Georgian people and you must pay us that money in order to be released." And this was done openly; not that the money which was being extorted in this way would be put it in someone's pocket, rather it would go into the state treasury. It was a form of governmental extortion and similar "extortion" was imposed on a number of other former officials and businessmen. Well, the American partner got quite upset—after all, this was his company that was being destroyed and he was the one who, in the end, was going to have to pay the money. I spent many, many hours with the American businessman, both in person and on the phone. The American partner hired Covington and Burling to represent them and Stu Eizenstat was the one that was representing the American company. Stu has had a distinguished career in several departments of the government. I spoke to Stu on the phone several times and I did spend a lot of time talking to Zurab Zhvania who had become the Prime Minister by then. I spoke to Zhvania, whose responsibility it should have been, but then, Georgia being Georgia, I also spoke to President Saakashvili about it because everything is very personal in Georgia and, in essence, anything of that magnitude would come from the President and only the President could make it right. Well, there were many, many conversations about this case and, in the end, the American company had to come up with, I forget the exact amount of money, I think it was about $15 million, to get the son-in-law out of jail and also to change the American partner's share of the company from 49 per cent to 51 per cent. There was a rather amusing dénouement to this. When the authorities went to Jokhtaberidze's cell to tell him that he was now free to go, he refused to leave. He said, "I'm not guilty of anything and I demand a hearing in which I'll be found innocent of whatever charges have been brought against me and I'm not leaving until I'm vindicated." And they had to actually take him out by force.

In another case a ring of kidnappers was arrested. I mentioned, I think, in one of the earlier tapes that kidnapping for money had become a kind of a Georgian vocation and often the police were involved and that was the case this time. There was, I believe, a former police general who was involved and some other individuals, and we heard word that one of the key individuals who had been arrested in this raid that had been tortured in prison. And I mentioned this to the Minister of Internal Affairs who said they would look into it. Then I mentioned it to the Prime Minister and then to the President. Well, the rumors persisted and so I said to the Minister of Justice, "Look, I know this is unusual. I have no right to see this person, who is a Georgian citizen, but I think it would be in everyone's interest if one of my officers were to go see him to try to lay these charges to rest, because you're getting a bad image in the United States and in Western Europe." Well, the Minister agreed that we could do this. One of the officers working in the Political Section was a former military officer and he had certainly been exposed to force and violence in his career, and I told him to go to the prison and just give me his candid assessment. And his assessment was that the man had surely been beaten and most likely some form of electrical shock had been applied to him. And I went back and told that to the Prime Minister and to the President and to my knowledge they then stopped that mistreatment. I took it to the Minister of Internal Affairs and to the Minister of Justice. The latter said that he accepted what I was telling him and would assemble a commission which would look into it. If the people that allegedly did it were found guilty, they would be punished. So that was a pretty good response. Now I can't verify what actually happened after that, but the reports of mistreatment certainly stopped.

I'll give you another example. There was a rather nasty gang operating out of the town of Zugdidi, which is over near the Abkhaz border; robbers and bandits, basically, engaged in some small scale smuggling, but nasty people. Well, the police descended on them with helicopters and automatic weapons, there was a shootout, a couple of them got killed, others were wounded, and I don't know how many people were hauled off to prison. All of this was shown on Georgina television. So, you know, the message began to percolate through Georgian society that, well, times have changed. These new people are serious about trying to eliminate some of this corruption and some of this permissive atmosphere in which the criminals have been allowed to conduct their business as though it were a business. People began to respond and to appreciate that and I think the Georgian government has remained relatively clean. Now, I've been away for two years. I am not in a position to state with authority that some degree of corruption hasn't crept back in but compared to the situation prior to the Saakashvili government taking power, I think it is vastly improved and Saakashvili and his people deserve great credit for that.

Q: By the time you left how was our military action in Iraq viewed?

MILES: I mentioned previously that Shevardnadze had sent a handwritten letter to President Bush stating, for a number of reasons, which he laid out I think rather eloquently, that Georgia would allow itself to be listed in the coalition of the willing in support of the American intervention in Iraq and the Saakashvili government—and they had allowed a small contingent from the Georgian forces which we had begun to train to go to Iraq to serve in various kinds of security programs. They were kind of a—at that

time there were three rings of security basically around Baghdad and they were in one of the outer rings of security. So they were in harm's way, basically. Well, we continued the training, of course. While all this was going on, the training continued without stop and the new government rather quickly agreed to increase, in fact, they volunteered to increase the number of troops in the Georgian contingent and they continued to increase it during the time I was there and only a couple of months ago, actually, they agreed to increase it to 2000 troops. Now, 2000 troops from a country the size of Georgia is a significant amount and in fact I think it raises their contribution on a per capita basis to the highest of any of the countries that are there, including our own, and even in terms of actual numbers I think it puts them about in third place. So they have been quite supportive.

At the same time they have had an interest in developing a friendly relationship with Iran and I think it would be fair to say that they would not see entirely eye to eye with us on U.S. policies in the Middle East. But that never became an issue; they were rather subtle about this and they never took on American policy directly in any way.

Q: Were the Kurds a problem there or not?

MILES: No, no. There were a few Kurds in Azerbaijan, and if there were any in Georgia—

Q: But it wasn't—there wasn't—

MILES: No. There are a few Kurds in Georgia—they are called Yazidis. But they are such a tiny number that the group is virtually insignificant demographically.

If I may say so, I went out of my way to develop a good relationship with the representatives of the Islamic community in Georgia. There are a lot of Azeris living there and a few Turks. And I tried really hard to, first of all, to tell our side of the story of what we were doing and what we were trying to do in Iraq and, second, to try to understand what they were thinking, what was their attitude, and frankly there was also an element of self-protection in this because the last thing in the world I wanted was any kind of a terrorist attack against the Embassy or against my family or our people. I don't think that Islamic fundamentalism was a real issue in Georgia. I'm a little out of touch with Azerbaijan now, and I wouldn't want to speak for Azerbaijan, but in Georgia I found the Muslim community to be very moderate, and any Islamic fundamentalism was lying pretty low. And while there were things to watch, which is what we did, it wasn't an issue which appeared to us at the time to be threatening or even something about which we should be terribly concerned.

Q: Well, Dick, when you left there, sort of whither Georgia? How did you feel things were going?

MILES: There were two things that bothered me, well, three things, that bothered me about Georgia. One was the personality of President Saakashvili, who was a rather

impulsive person. And while he had basic democratic instincts he was also a real Georgian and didn't mind stepping on toes in order to achieve his immediate goals, which maybe is understandable for someone in that position but it bothered me, it caused me some concern and I'll give you a good example later on.

And I was bothered by the fact that the Georgians couldn't seem to bring themselves to improve their relationship with the Russians, and in fact I'd say it got worse after I left, not because I left, of course, but the circumstances were such that the relationship with Russia got even worse after 2005. And it has remained strained. And I never understood why the Georgians didn't make more of an effort to improve that relationship. But despite my rather constant advice they just didn't seem to want to do it.

And my third concern was the fact that the Georgian government, I thought, wasn't making enough of an effort to put people to work. I discussed this with the government officials at all levels: if I had been in a position of leadership in Georgia I would have started some kind of WPA-type [Works Progress Administration] project just to get some of these unemployed people doing something and put a little money in their pockets. I would have encouraged even more the development of small business. There was an increase in the number of boutiques and small businesses that opened after the new government took power because they were free of some of the bribes and whatnot of the past and they had a safer atmosphere in which to work. But it was still a slow process and the small business sector was not really employing a great number of people. You know, it's a truism that most jobs are actually in the small business sector, not in factories that hire 14,000 people or whatever. But of course in Soviet times people tended to think in terms of those factories, and in the former Soviet Union, they still do. I always encouraged the Georgians to try to free up that entrepreneurial spirit which they always had. Of any ethnic group in the former Soviet Union, the Georgians were the great entrepreneurs, so they know how to do it, they know how to make money, you just have to create the right conditions for them.

Q: It used to be the small merchants who kept the capitalist spirit alive by playing to Moscow and selling stuff and, I mean—

MILES: Oh yes, fly up with melons and whatnot, mandarin oranges, peaches and so on, sell them on the sidewalk. And also the tourist business in Soviet Georgia was quite a strange business. I mean, they had what amounts to bed and breakfast places where tourists would come down from Moscow in the days of the old Soviet Union and would be allowed to go to someone's home and rent a room and have breakfast there, whatever, for money. I mean that was pretty much unthinkable anywhere else in the former Soviet Union but the Georgians did it. So they were quite capable of working hard and developing the economy but I just didn't see the government trying hard enough to encourage that free enterprise spirit. Oh, they talked the talk, but I don't think the new crowd of political leaders really understood business any more than the old crowd did. To them it was just a revenue source and they wanted to harvest that revenue before the harvest was ready.

They did try hard to attract the large investors and they made their peace with the telecom company that I mentioned earlier. They also made their peace with a rather interesting Danish fellow, Jan Bonde Nielsen, who owned the Green Oaks Company which was involved in a number of enterprises down in Adjara. He had had a cozy relationship with Abashidze involving oil terminals and refrigerator facilities at the port and God knows what, and one would have thought that if anyone would be on the outs with the new government it would be Jan Bonde Nielsen. But he was clever enough and the new government was clever enough to work out a modus vivendi and so he's still there, still doing business. I just read something on the internet the other day about some new investment that he was making there and that's good and I'm glad to see it. I just would have liked to have seen a little more effort being put to the small business sector and also to the agricultural sector. There was some but not enough and there still is a major unemployment problem in Georgia. So those are the things that mostly worried me.

There had been a problem earlier, and I'll mention this as an example of Saakashvili's impulsiveness. Always the Georgians had talked a lot about their desire to regain authority over the separatist provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. And in the summer of 2004, without going into all the minute details of it, we became aware that there was a military buildup along the borders, the southern borders of South Ossetia, which is not very far from Tbilisi, by the way, and that there was a corresponding buildup in South Ossetia itself and a resultant rise in military tension. Well, to make something of a long story short, this spilled over into active hostilities which quickly became a fiasco on the Georgian side. The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defense were both up on the frontlines directing their troops to move and to fire over mobile phones with no security at all. It could have been an absolute disaster. As it was it was bad enough. I don't recall the exact death count, I think it was something like 16 soldiers died on the Georgian side. The Ossetian side, while I was there, never announced the number of Ossetian soldiers or civilians that died but I'm sure that some civilians died in addition to the soldiers; and a near disaster was diverted only when the Georgian authorities realized that not only did we not support this military adventurism but we condemned it; we were not in favor of it. And I delivered some pretty harsh messages along those lines. Special envoys came out from Washington to repeat those messages and pretty quickly the government pulled its troops back.

Q: Were EU representatives doing the same thing?

MILES: Not a lot, not a lot. The British Ambassador was. The OSCE had a small military observer group for South Ossetia headquartered in Tbilisi. They did try to keep OSCE member countries aware of what was happening in South Ossetia. However, this group was so small—I think it was a seven person mission—it was so tiny it would try hard to keep at least one man up in South Ossetia at all time. One man! They were doing some reporting but they didn't have very much clout with the Georgian government or with the Ossetian authorities, either. No, our criticism pretty much stood alone at that time.

Q: Why were we protesting?

MILES: We didn't want to see the situation resolved by force of arms and we were afraid that the Russians would intervene and you'd wind up with the Georgians fighting the Russians and the Georgians hoping or expecting, whichever, that we would come to their assistance when I think that it would be rather unlikely that we would do that. So it was a bad situation.

And, in fact, to head off any Georgian government effort to repeat that misadventure, I suggested to Dan Fried—at that time, the NSC Senior Director for that part of the world— that it would be useful for President Bush to visit Georgia and to make it clear to Saakashvili that we didn't approve of the use of force to settle the issues between Georgia proper and South Ossetia or Abkhazia. That was the primary purpose of the President's visit in May of 2005 and, I must say, President Bush was quite forceful in talking to Saakashvili about that.

Q: Well then, you came back in 2005?

MILES: Summer of 2005, yes.

Q: And then what?

MILES: Well, I took the retirement course at FSI, including the job search program, without any intention of working, to tell you the truth, but I had heard it was a good program, and it is. And then I did retire at the end of August 2005, and was very happy being retired. But early in 2006, I was sought out by Ambassador Collins, our former Ambassador to Russia—

Q: Jim Collins.

MILES: Jim Collins, who was an old Indiana University classmate of mine. We were at the Russian East European Institute together in the 1960s, early 1960s. I was approached by Jim to ask if I would consider taking the job of Director of the Open World Leadership Center. The Center, which organizes orientation visits to the United States by young people from the former Soviet Union, is funded by the U.S. Congress. It's headquartered in the Library of Congress and the Chairman of the Board of Directors is Jim Billington, the Librarian of Congress. It's actually independent of the Library but has a strong connection. It's really Jim Billington's baby. Setting it up was his idea and he has worked hard to oversee it and to maintain Congressional support for it. I wasn't looking for work and didn't particularly want a job, but the Open World Leadership Center had an interesting program and, of course, I was flattered to be asked. I talked to Jim Collins, I talked to Billington, I talked—

Q: Who is the Librarian of Congress.

MILES: Yes. I talked to a few other people and I said, okay, I'll take this but on a one year contract basis.

I think I mentioned earlier that technically I retired when I left Bulgaria in 2002 because I became 65 earlier in that year. And I then was sent to Georgia on a Presidential appointment. And the Department took out retirement pay during the three years that I was in Georgia. Well, I was on Presidential pay, and I didn't think a whole lot about it. And then when I went to the retirement people in 2005 to say, okay, I'm really retired now, I'd like to start getting my pension now, there was just an awful dust up over the fact that I had retired legally as far as the State Department was concerned in 2002. I was told that I wasn't entitled to retirement pay for the three years, from 2002 to 2005. I could get back the little contribution I had made into the retirement fund, but I wouldn't be getting any additional pension for those three years of work. In the interim, the State Department not only started to pay my pension plus a fair amount of money for the unused annual leave but they also sent me back pension for the entire three years that I was in Georgia. Of course, I wasn't entitled to this. Well, Sharon almost had a heart attack because of this. She went down to the ATM in our local grocery store and at that point for whatever reason we had a low amount in the checking account; she knew it was going to be less than $1000, and she took out $100 or whatever for spending money, and when she got the receipt out of the machine it read:-- remaining balance of $251,000-- because the State Department had deposited $250,000—a quarter of a million dollars—into my account, which was the amount that I would have gotten if I had been on a full pension during the three years I was in Georgia. And I actually had considerable difficulty giving that money back. I mean, it was the damnedest thing; the Department finance people denied any knowledge of this and I said look, I know I'm not entitled to this money so would you please take it back. Finally they did, of course, but this was just hilarious.

Q: What was this Library of Congress program?

MILES: The Open World Leadership Center was set up in 1999 to bring young people over from the former Soviet Union on 10 day long orientation trips to the United States. The criteria, basically, are that the participants be young, they should be under 40 for the most part; they should be 50/50 men and women; and they should not have been in the United States before. And they don't have to speak English; we provide an interpreter. We also we provide a so-called facilitator, that is someone from whichever country, Russia, Latvia, whatever country it is, who has been to America—on a Muskie Fellowship or whatever—and gone back, so they know something of our culture and also the culture of the country overseas and they can act to kind of interpret what's happening in a cultural sense. This is very important and I think the provision of this "facilitator" is one of the keys to the success of the Open World program. We would bring over usually four or five people in a group, so very small groups. We'd set up kind of a theme that we would like to support, like local government or judges or poets or—and the themes could go from the sublime to the ridiculous. Like, we had one very successful group last year of Russian women aviators. They just had a hell of a time. You know, whatever we can think of which makes a good theme for a group. And then they have a usually two day orientation before they arrive in the U.S. because they also have to get their visas, which takes time nowadays in Moscow or whatever capital city we're talking about, Kiev and so on. And then they have about a one and a half day orientation here in

Washington—partly orientation, partly simply to help them get over jet lag—and then they go off to a community in America somewhere where they stay with people in their homes, and it could be Des Moines, Iowa, it could be Los Angeles, it could be Alaska, Hawaii, Florida—we've sent people to every state in the United States—and they stay there for about a week and do whatever it is the program has them doing. We had some people here on avian flu, for example, and so they went around in Raleigh, North Carolina, and talked to the local officials and the medical people about how they are set up to handle an outbreak of avian flu. This was one of our most successful groups. Anyhow, after a week or so out in America somewhere, they go straight back to wherever they came from in Russia, Ukraine or some other country in the former Soviet Union.

Then there is an alumni program, which is voluntary on their part, but it's designed to help them stay in touch with each other and also with their American host families. And it's set up with an interactive website. You can see it on the Open World website, where you can actually enter in your communication on the website in Russian and it'll be translated into English or vice versa. It's a machine translation and may lack finesse but it's better than no translation. And so some aspects of the program are quite robust. Like the judges program, which is run almost on an autonomous basis, and several hundred judges have come over here, and, at their expense, several score of American judges have gone over to Russia and other countries from the United States. I had hardly started work in April of last year when I found myself at lunch with our Chief Justice, hosting the Chief Justice of the Supreme Appellate Court of Russia and two or three other Russian judges who had come along, in a small setting at the Supreme Court, you know, no more than 15 people for lunch, and that was then followed by, if you can believe this, a two hour work session during which the Chief Justice sat there for two hours, and two other Justices of the Supreme Court sat there for two hours, and conducted a substantive dialog with their Russian friends. I mean, that's amazing. How could you conceivably get that kind of time in any other way? There isn't a lawyer in the United States that wouldn't kill for that kind of time with the Chief Justice and the other Justices of the Supreme Court, and these Russians got it for free basically.

So it's a fine program. While I was there we did some new things. We began the reorganization of the office that had never been organized properly, if I can be blunt. We developed a five year strategic plan, which is published and you can read it on the website. We got this through the Board of Directors which is made up of members of the Senate and the House plus a few wealthy businessmen, and we got the approval of the Board to begin an expansion program. We had focused before pretty much on Russia and Ukraine and since 1999 over 11,000 people had come under those auspices. But the board wanted—and Billington and I wanted—to expand it to other countries. And so in this year, 2007, we've brought people over from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Moldova. So it's a very good program.

But I found I didn't want to work full time, quite frankly, and Billington and I had a bit of a clash of management styles, and so I told Billington that it was always my plan to leave in April of this year, it would have been a one year term, and I did in fact leave in December, late December, of 2006.

Q: Well Dick, I want to thank you very much. I appreciate what you have done here. This is great.

MILES: Well, I think it should be interesting and I look forward to seeing the transcript.

End of interview