

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

**AMBASSADOR THOMAS REEVE PICKERING**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy  
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*Q: Today is the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2003. This is an interview with Thomas, what's the middle initial?*

PICKERING: R.

*Q: What does that stand for?*

PICKERING: Reeve. R-e-e-v-e.

*Q: Pickering. P-i-c-k-e-r-i-n-g. This is being done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well Tom, let's start sort of from the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born?*

PICKERING: I was born in Orange, New Jersey, on November 5, 1931.

*Q: Tell me a bit about your family. Let's start on your father's side and your mother's side.*

PICKERING: Sure, the Pickering family, which I know a great deal about, came to the United States about 1630, settled in Salem, Massachusetts.

*Q: Where did they come from in England?*

PICKERING: Warwickshire, but I'm not sure exactly where. The original Pickering was a shipwright and a carpenter. He built a house in 1651 that's been in the family ever since and we celebrated the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Salem, Massachusetts.

*Q: Where?*

PICKERING: In Salem two years ago and they kindly invited me because they happened to see my name in print somewhere. But then I've come to know the members of the central Pickering family, all of whom have lived in the house. My family comes from the second son in the first generation whose name was Jonathan; all the other first sons and inheritors of the house have been called John with two exceptions -- Timothy the father of the Secretary of State in the late 1790s and his son the Secretary. I have a relationship, in a sense with him in that we share either a common great grandfather; his great grandfather was my grandfather eleven generations removed. Timothy Pickering was Secretary of State for both Washington and Adams.

He served in the revolution first as colonel of the militia from Essex County in Massachusetts and then later of the Board of War in Philadelphia helping to raise money for supplies and payment of the forces and then as possibly a Brigadier or Major General -- Quartermaster General of the army at Yorktown. At war's end he acquired land in north central Pennsylvania which had already been settled by pioneers from Connecticut, he was run out of town on a rail, went to Massachusetts where his neighbors raised money and gave him a farm. Washington used him to negotiate two treaties with the New York state Indian community (Five Nations) which still exist today. He later become Postmaster General under Washington, failed in an effort to negotiate the Northwestern frontier boundary with Canada along the Lakes and then served as Secretary of War in Washington's second cabinet. He has much to do with Randolph's departure as Secretary of State. Washington appointed him as Acting. He refused the post a number of times but later took it under Washington's insistence. When Adams was elected there was not yet a tradition of cabinet resignations and so the cabinet stayed on. He and Adams did not get along. Pickering played a role in the XYZ affair which led to the Quasi-Naval War with France. He was fired by Adams after he came out against his re-election in 1800 and after refusing Adams's request that he resign. He later served as both a member of the House and the US Senate from Massachusetts and died around 1826.

*Q: The name rings down revolutionary...*

PICKERING: Bell. My family through all that period, those eleven generations, has lived mainly in either New England or the Middle-Atlantic states. My great, great grandfather on my father's side was postmaster in Elmira, New York and I knew my great grandfather in the 1930s and my grandfather lived in East Orange, New Jersey, hence my birth in Orange Memorial Hospital. My father was a china and glass salesman and we lived in Rutherford, New Jersey until I went away to college.

My family on my mother's side came to the US from the UK about the 1840's. My great, great grandfather was an apothecary apparently. My great grandfather was put on a sailing bark in 1866 in New York at age 16 as an ordinary sailor and made a round trip to Japan. I inherited his log books from the voyage. Their name was Chasteneau -- clearly French for "pure born" *chaste ney*, and my mother, without too much to go on as far as I can see, always claimed some connection with the Valois royal family in France (presumably an illegitimate offspring, hence the family name!). My grandfather on that side was in business selling fine paper in the US and Latin America. He was apprenticed in his teens in the 1880s in Berlin in the leather industry and spoke German and Spanish.

My paternal grandmother's family I recall little about, although the family name Reeve comes from there and was my father's middle name as well and is now carried by my son, grandson and great, grandsons.

My grandmother on my mother's side died of acute arthritis before my birth. She came from Pennsylvania and the family name was Zeller, an Alsatian name and an ancestor founded a small fortified farm house built over a spring near Reading where it is a miniature State Park today with the name "Heinrich Zeller -- 1743" inscribed above the entrance door.

Clearly more than you asked for or wanted to know!

*Q: Let's talk a little bit about your father. Did he have a college education?*

PICKERING: No. He had a year at Andover Prep School and he was one of two sets of twins and the fourth son in the family, all males. The oldest son, his oldest brother, went to Columbia and one of the other sets of twins went to Cornell, but the others did not have a university education and neither did my grandfather.

*Q: Do you have any feeling of, usually when somebody goes to university in the family and somebody doesn't, there is kind of a division because you are coming from a generation that most of the people I talk to of your age, my age, family had not a university education.*

PICKERING: It didn't seem to be. It was very interesting because my grandfather was extremely successful in the jewelry business, retired in his mid-40s and did an enormous number of things. He became a rather adept painter, he became an astronomer, had an observatory on his roof, was American secretary of the Association of Variable Star Observers (those that change in light intensity) and took up cooking and photography. I have many of his photographs and some of his paintings. He traveled extensively around the world, visited his astronomical friends in Japan and Italy and painted a lot of pictures overseas from photos he had taken. He was a very interesting man in his own right and perhaps at least some interest in foreign travel stemmed in the genes from that gentleman.

*Q: How about his wife, your grandmother, from that side?*

PICKERING: My grandmother whom I knew very well, I knew my grandfather quite well too, he died in 1945 and my grandmother much later, came from a family that we can trace back, we know the names, we don't know a great deal about them. She was the kind of the matriarch of the family when I was young and growing up, with the five sons and a kind of large and growing set of progeny. I think was interested always in what was going on but was basically at the time I knew her kind of retired and living in a hotel in New Jersey in her post-married life after she lost her husband.

*Q: With your father, he was you say a salesman doing what?*

PICKERING: He sold china and glass. During the depression he made a living almost selling door-to-door in New Jersey and in the New York and Connecticut suburbs. By the time of the second World War he had gotten a job with an American manufacturer of table glassware in Cambridge, Ohio, and was actually provided a small utility-sized panel truck, which was the family car, to carry on his business which he did with that company for many years selling in New York state and in New Jersey mainly to everyone from jewelers to department stores. He knew the business extremely well and had many good contacts and was quite successful as a salesman under very difficult times and trying circumstances in the great depression. He managed to help me go through college and assisted me in graduate school. Almost at the time I began graduate school, he lost that job -- the company was bought out by some merger firm that wanted it for tax write-offs so it went out of business. He then went into business for himself

because he knew everybody in the field on a personal basis. He represented several, both domestic and imported, lines of china and glassware and sold until basically he was in his late '70s living in Pennsylvania. He finally gave it up and died at age 83, in 1986.

*Q: Did he, I ask this question because I have a father who is a salesman, did he hit you with 'get out there and know the territory and people', in other words was he selling you on the attributes of a salesman?*

PICKERING: I used to travel with him once in a while and he often talked about what was successful and he often talked about his own philosophy, which is very much what you described.

*Q: That is very much the American way.*

PICKERING: Exactly, very much. It is not too far from some elements of our chosen field -- diplomacy

*Q: Contacts, soldiers and all.*

PICKERING: Self-made person. He used his people skills and his ability to know people to develop cliental. He was more interested in permanent clients than quick sales.

*Q: Were you sort of chalking this up in your mental blackboard?*

PICKERING: I was and I always thought it paid dividends in diplomacy to understand that approach.

*Q: Well now, on your mother's side. What do you know about your mother's side of the family?*

PICKERING: Quite a bit. My mother's...

*Q: What was her family name?*

PICKERING: The family name was Chastenev, which is Huguenot, Chastenev. They can trace their direct ancestors back to England in the 1840s. I think that my great, great grandfather on that side came as an apothecary, but I am not sure. He had a son who in 1866 and '67 at age sixteen or seventeen worked as a sailor on a sailing bark, the 'Benefactress', out of New York to Japan and returned. He kept a journal, actually a log, which I have. It was given to me by my grandfather who knew that I liked international travel and was making a career in diplomacy. My grandfather spent most of his life on my mother's side traveling internationally. At age, I think, fifteen my maternal grandfather was apprenticed in the leather business in Berlin and came back reputedly speaking more German than English about five or six years later. He visited the Eiffel Tower about the year of its opening and left a commemorative medal. Later on he worked for a paper company, a company that made fancy paper in New York City and lived in a suburb of New York, Rutherford, New Jersey, where I grew up. In fact, after I was born my parents lived in his house until about age three or four. I can actually remember our moving on that occasion.

He over the years did a great deal of business in Latin America and developed reasonably good Spanish. My grandmother on that side died before I was born with severe rheumatic arthritis. He married again a Scottish immigrant who I had as a step-grandmother while I was growing up and who died after my grandfather died in 1952.

*Q: What about your step-grandmother? Was she much of a presence in your life?*

PICKERING: She was quite a strong presence in my life. She was very musical and a schoolteacher. I would say strong but not nearly as strong, obviously, as my parents were, but we lived in the same town. We saw each other fairly frequently.

*Q: How about your mother's education?*

PICKERING: My mother was educated in something called the Scudder School in New York City, which was more perhaps of a finishing than a secretarial school. Her father liked international travel, thought it was important, so she as a young secondary school graduate was given a trip to Europe in the early twenty's and kept all the mementoes, which I as a child used to enjoy reviewing.

*Q: How did your mother and father meet?*

PICKERING: My father's brother from the different set of twins had met a young woman from Rutherford, New Jersey, who was the daughter of a physician. They got married and it was through them, she was a friend of my mother, that my father and mother met.

*Q: How big was your family? Your immediate family?*

PICKERING: My immediate family was just myself and my sister who is two years younger than I am.

*Q: Are you close to your sister?*

PICKERING: Reasonably so, but much closer now than we were growing up like lots of siblings we had differences.

*Q: She was a little brat?*

PICKERING: Not so much.

*Q: That was your perspective.*

PICKERING: My perspective, but she's had a very international life as well. She married a Harvard graduate, someone who had his Masters in Education there. She met him at Brown when she was at university. They taught school in Long Island, she had itchy feet and so did he. He taught social studies and she followed my wife, Alice, into a library course and became a school librarian They did two long tours of service at the American Community School in

Athens, she learned to speak reasonably good Greek, went back to the United States in the '80s to serve out time to retire and get a pension. In 1989, the two of them were offered a job in Damascus and spent subsequently five years teaching in the American School in Damascus and then retired again and have found a home in Greece and so they live in the Northern Aegean but are frequently back here in the United States. In 2014 she sold the home on the island of Skiathos and they now reside in Brant Rock, Massachusetts, south of Boston.

*Q: What was the family name?*

PICKERING: Her married name is Hunt.

*Q: My wife may know her because we lived in Athens.*

PICKERING: Did you?

*Q: During the '70s.*

PICKERING: Of course it may have been a little earlier than they would have been there. His name is Bruce Hunt and he taught Social Studies, then she later became school librarian. Her name is Marcia.

*Q: Now growing up, you were born in 1931. I assume some of your first memories are sort of the Depression weren't they?*

PICKERING: Very much. I think it had a large amount of influence. I can remember because we lived in four different houses in Rutherford, New Jersey, that the second house we lived in was across the street from a Jr. High School, which was a polling place so I can remember very clearly the electoral signs for the election of 1936, with Alf Landon and sunflowers. I can remember the election in 1940 and Franklin Roosevelt sped through my hometown and we saw the fleeting motorcade from the top of my street. I was very impressed by the fact that there were many empty houses in this suburb outside of New York, normally in a place where housing was sought for; many of them Victorian kind of small mansions becoming more and more dilapidated with no tenants. I can remember we moved several times and I suspect to adjust the rent. As rents went down we were not able to sustain ourselves where we were, but by 1940 my father had done well enough to invest in a house in an in-fill lot on the same street that we had lived on in two other houses and that new house was completed in 1940. That is where I derived some of my early interest in construction because I watched it go up. But all over my town people were working in the WPA (Works Project Administration), straightening sidewalks, trimming trees, preparing parks. There was a huge amount of evidence of people actually working in government (New Deal) supported jobs. My mother was often approached by people at the house for food, always somehow managed to find something to help people. Don't think she ever turned anyone away despite the fact we did not have much ourselves. It was kind of tough times for almost everybody.

*Q: Well everybody was sort of at the same level in a way so you really, as a child, didn't I mean, this is just the way life was, wasn't it?*

PICKERING: I think some of the more startling things were that it was almost an all-white town but somewhere along the line my mother maybe because they did house work in the neighborhood, got to know a black family and so we spent time with their children occasionally, not a lot, but it was always impressive to me because the town was fairly rock-ribbed. The '30s were not a time free of prejudice and it was not necessarily a comfortable position for a white, low, low-middle class family to be involved in.

*Q: What about a Jewish connection? Was there much in...*

PICKERING: Some in my suburb, a lot less than in other suburbs. We had a synagogue, I did a lot of things in Boy Scouts, it was a Presbyterian troop but we had some Jewish boys who entered the scouting troop.

*Q: How about Roman Catholics? This is a time when there was quite a separation, wasn't it?*

PICKERING: There was and it continued. We had a large Roman Catholic Church in town with a very significant school, including a competing high school with the public one. I went to public high school; my family were Protestants, Episcopalians, very active in church. We had Roman Catholics in the public high school as well but there was a kind of separation, if you could put it, between the public high school and St. Mary's that continued for quite a while and I think that also was part of the environment.

*Q: Did, by any chance, being in that part of New Jersey, did the Lindbergh baby kidnapping have any effect?*

PICKERING: It had a slight effect and I can recall the furor at the time and the discussions. I can also recall seeing the Hindenburg Zeppelin pass over my hometown on its way to Lakehurst on one of its trips. Of course, I can recall with great clarity the beginnings of the Second World War. In the late summer of 1939 we were at the New Jersey shore with family and there was a tremendous amount of interest in what was happening in Poland, in Germany, the battle of the River Platte, some of those things. I spent as we always did, the Sunday morning, late Sunday morning at my maternal grandfather's anticipating lunch there which was a usual family affair when Pearl Harbor came over the radio and I remember that vividly.

*Q: Was your family, this was in the '30s, I always think of New Jersey as the suburbs there beings sort of rock-rib Republican but your family would be from a group not as well endowed as some others. How did they fit into the new era of Roosevelt?*

PICKERING: I think my mother was the predominant political influence in the family. This was a town solidly Republican; in fact the local newspaper was called The Rutherford Republican. My mother was quite an outspoken Democrat, tremendously fond of Franklin Roosevelt and in large measure I think because of Roosevelt's performance as president in the early days of the Depression when things were so bad. My father was less vocal but I think at times was supportive of my mother's point of view, but was more guarded I think in his political expressions. Within this town there were a few other families, who just happened by chance to

be close to my mother and father, who had similar, almost heretical, certainly schismatic views for that town, about politics.

*Q: Did you as a kid get involved in elementary school in politics; I mean the kids who were Republican, the kids who were Democrat?*

PICKERING: No, I think not. The town was comfortable in its presumption that all living human beings they ever associated with were familiar with and sympathetic to their political point of view.

*Q: How about at home? During your growing up period did the family get together at dinner and talk about things?*

PICKERING: Very often and I think before the war and during the war often about domestic politics and about what was happening internationally. Of course, I was old enough at the time of the beginning of the war to follow it avidly, to be extremely interested in it. I suppose that some of my early interest in military questions stems from that particular period.

*Q: World War II was a greatest geographic tutor that one can image. I can still most often Benghazi and all these names that came out of the war, just are fixed in our mind.*

PICKERING: I think so Stuart and I think the other interesting thing was that I became really for one reason or another, I think in part because I got a stamp book for Christmas in the mid-'30s, extremely interested in collecting stamps. It was in fact I think my grandfather who got a huge amount of international mail and he presented me with a large collection of envelopes and separated stamps, which I learned to soak. But it also was an extremely interesting geography teacher and you would go through the stamp book and find remnants of the former Czarist empire which for two or three years had issued stamps, no longer extant, but listed there places like Tannu Tuva and the Russian Far Eastern Republic. So I got extremely interested as I did in colonial Africa and the fact that stamps were issued by the French and the British. I can remember collecting large numbers of the coronation stamps for Edward VIII that never actually, of course, matched any coronation and then for George VI. I got to know kind of the British Empire and the small islands through this particular hobby and then naturally as the war went on and these names were mentioned frequently on the radio, I followed with real interest, although I can't say that my geography of the Soviet Union really improved until I went there.

*Q: I'm sure you grew up looking at the map, the world map, and all that red of the British Empire.*

PICKERING: Very much and very impressed by that and also to the extent of the French Empire, but interested in other areas of the world. I think that wars covered by radio and now television do teach geography; stamp collecting also teaches geography. So does collecting maps. I was fond of the National Geographic and found state issued highway maps interesting too. I've always loved geography and so perhaps more than others I was very much attached to thinking about the world, very interested in foreign travel, and wondered during the war whether I would ever be able to do that.



*Q: What about reading? Did you read early? Were you a reader?*

PICKERING: Yes, I did. I can in fact remember that while I was reading before that I had a bad case of the mumps or measles, I suspect in the late '30s and my mother found somewhere two wonderful books, one on what was happening in the world at the time of George Washington and a similar one about the time of Abraham Lincoln. I devoured these and found them absolutely fascinating; it was my first introduction to, I suppose, non-American history. I also was tremendously interested in the Civil War and there were huge numbers of very bad books, many of them oriented to young boys, both about the Civil War and then about the First World War. We had a good library in Rutherford so I spent a lot of time there, once I discovered it, looking at books and taking out books. I started in the Children's section. I had an aunt with a sister who worked in the library. And she allowed me to haunt the upstairs, adult, portion to look for and take out books I was interested in reading

*Q: Was the librarian helpful?*

PICKERING: She was and in fact the aunt that I spoke to you about has a sister who was one of the librarians, so we had a sort of family connection there.

*Q: At school, you went to the what...?*

PICKERING: Rutherford public schools.

*Q: How was elementary school?*

PICKERING: I can remember lots about it. We ended up in our new house in 1940 living a half a block from what was called the Lincoln School; it still is, in Rutherford, built about the turn-of-the-century. I remember all kinds of interesting things. At one point we had a teacher in the early days who had grown up in Germany, although she was not a German, but spoke excellent German, and she spent a lot of time showing us slides of countries in Europe so that we would get to know something about them. She taught us Silent Night in German, very interesting. I remember learning to write and because I'm left handed how difficult it was to write with a steel pointed pen with your left hand and not smear.

*Q: You had an ink well in your desk, didn't you?*

PICKERING. An ink well in the desk, but I also learned as most left-handers do to write from the top down with a bend in your wrist so you didn't smear.

*Q: You were at least fortunate that they weren't trying to make you write with your right.*

PICKERING: No. I think that probably a few years prior to that they would have and maybe some teachers tried. They did want me to try to write with my right hand, they thought it would be easier for them if I did. I couldn't do it and didn't really want to. I must say that probably my penmanship has continued to show over the years that struggle somehow.

*Q: Were there any courses particularly fun for you and not so fun?*

PICKERING: I then went on to junior high and then to high school. I think that the things that I enjoyed most were history and related kinds of things. I got interested in science and took science, but I can't say it sang for me. I was not particularly good in math, didn't particularly like it, it was only when I went to university and took a very solid year with fantastic teachers of both pre-calculus and calculus that I got really interested in mathematics. I can't say that I was particularly interested in English. I enjoyed reading and enjoyed some of the forced reading, but also found my own choice of books and my interest in those kinds of things much more to my own taste.

*Q: Do you recall as you got into the junior high and high school time any areas that were, or books that were particularly interesting or made you think or change?*

PICKERING: Well, it was a long time ago. I suspect that helped and I suspect that the opportunity to read books, I read a lot so I can't really pick out anything that I thought was totally seminal in terms of changing my attitudes or point of view.

*Q: How about teachers? Any teachers? I always like to recognize teachers for their...*

PICKERING: I had a very interesting Armenian-American teacher whose name was Boyan, who was very good at teaching geometry and math. Others don't kind of ring a bell but I thought we had good teachers in the school system and generally kept up. I was accepted to college I think probably to my surprise because my high school grades hovered around C or B.

*Q: Welcome to the club. What about extra curricular activities in junior high and high school?*

PICKERING: I would say that I was probably both fairly lazy and so bad and uncoordinated at sports that my efforts there were probably pretty traumatic. I remember in my last year I played goalie for a while on the high school soccer team until we were smashed by Kearny, which as you probably know is a Scotts-Irish town at which all high school soccer players were pros. They got so many goals through me that I had to be withdrawn from the field.

*Q: Did you get involved in music, plays?*

PICKERING: No, less so. I got involved in plays by being the kind of electrician and the set maker and that kind of thing. I was very interested in that, but I didn't feel that I had either acting ability or certainly not musical ability.

*Q: By the time you got into high school let's see, World War II was at least on its way, I mean going.*

PICKERING: Yeah, I finished high school in '49 and I did three years of high school, I did the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in junior high. By the time I left junior high the war was over and all the post-war things were beginning to appear on the scene.

*Q: At this time, did anything about sort of diplomacy ever cross your line of sight?*

PICKERING: Yes and no, I think it crossed my line of sight but I didn't kind of put in the hook. I was, for a while, interested in the church, I was an acolyte, I gave the youth sermon. My mother sort of liked that and encouraged it. When I went to college I quickly changed my mind, but I looked at that a lot and thought about it. I also took a high school trip to the United Nations, which was then out at Lake Success in the Flushing Meadows, the building is still there. I can remember going for a visit but like lots of high school trips there was much more attention paid to being obstreperous and outrageous than it was any attention to the United Nations. But, I remember sitting in what was either a committee meeting or one of the assembly meetings for a while but not terribly interested although we collected a lot of books they gave out of UN documents and speeches in different languages, so I was sort of interested but not at that point really fixed on it.

*Q: Did your high school make the trip to Washington?*

PICKERING: No, I think it was probably beyond our financial means even in those days. To do Washington was a little far.

*Q: How about New York City? Did this...*

PICKERING: Well I, interestingly enough, became very much interested in New York City. We lived on the main line of the Erie railroad, which was only eight miles from the ferry docks, and then you could go across to Chamber Street in downtown New York and walk up a few blocks and take the subway. In the period of the war there was a wonderful museum in Rockefeller Center area about what was happening in the war, military equipment, those kinds of things and my mother wise as she probably was, lost her mind but always allowed me to go and take the train and do all of that. Later, I took the bus because you could take the bus into mid-town when the Port Authority built their large terminal outside the Lincoln Tunnel on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. I went in and out of Manhattan frequently. I can remember riding the ferry and saw the convoy's making up and in fact saw damaged ships in New York harbor that were either going to be repaired or were standing by for repairs. So those kinds of trips impressed me. I think about that time I probably went once with my father and mother to Ottawa, which is the only place I'd been outside the United States up until that time.

*Q: Was there any place you went or go to get a little country life, Catskills or something?*

PICKERING: It's interesting. My family was always devoted to the seashore and for all the war years my paternal grandfather and grandmother would go too. We would go to an old hotel in Bay Head, New Jersey, which is just at the upper end of Barnegat Bay and spend two weeks or more on the beach. My father and mother would drive down, sometimes he would have to work, sometimes we would be there without my grandfather, sometimes with my grandfather, but we loved it. It became the kind of family vacation spot.

In the meantime, I became very active in the Boy Scouts and the Boy Scouts that I was active in had a wonderful cabin in the woods in northern New Jersey in a Boy Scout reservation. So particularly in high school we would go up there camping on weekends doing a lot of walking. My Boy Scouts had an annual two-week summer camp at the regular Boy Scout camp but we totally managed it ourselves with a lot of help from adults and that kind of thing. That was a strong bonding experience. We had an annual canoe trip on Lake George. We would go up there on Memorial Day holiday, always bitter cold, always rough water, but always interesting and it took almost a whole day to get from the New York area up there.

At about the ninth grade the principal of the junior high had a family farm that he went to with his father and mother out in the southern tier of western New York at a place called Andover. A friend of mine had worked there so we worked there one year together. Then for the next four years I worked on farms in New York state. My father found through a client of his in Delaware County New York, in the upper east branch of the Delaware River a farm in Delhi (pronounced there 'dell high') where I worked for four years for a family, which I enjoyed very much.

*Q: Was there any spark of maybe I'll be a farmer, a future farmer of America?*

PICKERING: No, none, I loved it, it was very interesting. I particularly liked it because I liked building and repairing things and the fact that we did a lot of that as well as bringing in hay, cutting oats and corn, filling silos, slaughtering cattle, which was not my favorite task, but something I learned. It gave me a chance to learn to drive which I enjoyed doing. I learned to drive there, to drive the pickup truck. We used the pickup truck often to run the hayfork attached to a track on the barn ridge pool to take the hay off the wagon and distribute it in the hay mow. I got lots of opportunities to drive tractors, but even more importantly both farms still had horses and we still used horses heavily. I learned a lot about horses. I helped tighten up horse shoes and shoe horses, repair harness, put on harness, drive them as a team, hitch them up to wagons and that kind of thing.

*Q: That sounds great. When you were still in high school veterans were coming back, were you getting much in the way of stories of World War II?*

PICKERING: Sure very much and it was kind of interesting that older teenagers who were in my scout troop in the early '40s came back as veterans and came by to see us all and to tell us a little bit about what the war had been like. They didn't talk a lot about what they did and they were always people we admired and looked up to. We thought they were thousands of years older than we were. It was kind of interesting that some of them still kept those contacts. Through them we followed the war and what was happening. Every little town including mine, my little town had 17,000 people, of course, had casualties during the war.

*Q: What about after the war, the Berlin airlift would have come by the time you were a junior I guess in high school.*

PICKERING: Easily, yes.

*Q: How did you view the Cold War?*

PICKERING: Television was just beginning to come in so we were more interested in watching sports and television was rare. There was a tradition of the Saturday afternoon at the local movie theatre and there was always the RKO, or the Pathé News, which focused on those kinds of issues as well as a very heavy diet of radio. There was a fellow in New York, Arthur Godfrey, who many people know reported in the morning. I can remember on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944, waking up to his reporting on D-Day and I was happy. We stayed in touch very much with war developments principally through the radio and secondarily through these other things but there was a focus in civics and government courses even in high school on some of what was happening on the Cold War. I can remember, because it was broadcast throughout my high school, Harry Truman's speech on Greece and Turkey and the beginning of our aid programs there and that would have been what '47? or so. Anyway, those are all experiences that one way or another to which the school and these other opportunities turned our attention.

*Q: I take it from what you've been saying that your area was not much of an ethnic area, in other words...*

PICKERING: More WASPS (white, Anglo-Saxon, protestants) but it was interesting. Some of my best friends in high school -- I had a friend from a Lebanese family, they were very Americanized even though in fact and in those days the assimilation was the key word. We had families with Polish names, Hungarian names, so but in a sense they had become WASP-ized and the children in the school were no different than any of the rest of us. They may have had for us a funny last name, we sort of got used to that, but that became a common name for us. People occasionally laughed or joked but they would laugh and joke about a names like Pickering. There wasn't, I think, a lot of discrimination. We had a few blacks in high school class; almost none in junior high school. The high school represented the whole town, the junior high school that I went to was probably more on the side away from the railroad tracks. The black community lived near the tracks.

*Q: Did Rutherford, was it a bedroom community or was it a manufacturing community? What was it?*

PICKERING: Totally a bedroom community developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on the main line of the Erie Railroad, next to the Passaic River between there and the New Jersey marshes or the meadows. It was a square mile in area, by 1940 it was built up it had 17,466 people, thirty years later it had 17,500 people but it was interesting because near the end of the war the town's only large mansion -- called the castle -- in an open area, was bought up and a college was started, something called Fairly Dickinson

*Q: Oh yeah.*

PICKERING: Which later developed branches in Teaneck and Morristown. I think it abandoned the old castle in Rutherford, which was its starting place, but it obviously opened its door to a large numbers of veterans and that's how it got its start. They had a rather dynamic leader who saw this opportunity to develop it and so it became something of an institution in the town but there was no manufacturing., There were small manufacturing enterprises more in East

Rutherford which was I think more manufacturing oriented. A company called Becton Dickenson, which makes medical supplies, I think it still exists, had a large plant that made things like syringes just over the railroad tracks in East Rutherford and it helped give the name to the college by a donation.

*Q: When you were in high school was it sort of understood that you were going to go to college?*

PICKERING: It was very interesting, a very large percentage of the people in my generation in this bedroom community were headed for college. It was very clear my parents wanted me to and it was very clear in my mind that it was a very good thing to do, that it was the right thing to do. It fit my aspirations.

*Q: I think though I may be wrong on this but I think your parent's generation, something like ten percent of young people went to college.*

PICKERING: I think that is right and close to 80 or 90 percent, Stuart, of my generation in high school went to college.

*Q: It was this alone with the GI Bill, because we had a whole revolution in the United States and we were all part of it, but we didn't know.*

PICKERING: Almost, we could see it, we knew it, we knew that the percentages of high school graduating classes particularly in the suburbs, ours was not among the more affluent but it was not un-affluent, could begin to afford this, could find scholarships, could find opportunities, could compete. College education was comparatively inexpensive compared to what it is now in terms of family income, so all those opportunities opened up.

*Q: When you were a senior what were you pointed towards? Did you have any idea or...?*

PICKERING: No, I had looked at the ministry, I had looked perhaps at engineering. I was very interested...

*Q: I would like to go back for a second to the ministry. The Episcopal Church, which I was brought up in too broke down in the high and low, where, were you?*

PICKERING: Low Church Parish, most of the dioceses of Newark where I grew up was Low Church.

*Q: What about the ministry attracted you and didn't attract you?*

PICKERING: I think that what attracted me for a while was just my interest in religion. What didn't attract me was basically that I wasn't sure I wanted to spend my time giving sermons and sitting in one town and then I had a lot of family pressure in that direction. I responded that by going along which was probably not the right thing to do knowing that I wouldn't...

*Q: Meaning your mother?*

PICKERING: Mother, absolutely but I knew I wouldn't have to make a decision on that until I had a chance to go to college.

*Q: You were saying engineering interest?*

PICKERING: I was very interested in engineering. I was interested in building and engineering activities. While I was in high school the state of New Jersey built one of the new super highways through the southern part of my town five blocks away and I used to go over and watch what was going on, watch them build the bridge over the Passaic River and that kind of thing. I got very interested in that and got to know a lot about house building from having watched it.

*Q: The draft had been stopped. In '46 it stopped until for obvious reasons and started again in 1950, so the military was not something you had to do but did the military attract you at all?*

PICKERING: Very, I was very interested in the military maybe not as a career but I was prepared to do military service and kind of looked forward to it. I had no trouble registering in the draft.

*Q: It was sort of a right of passage.*

PICKERING: It was almost and kind of an obligation and also from my point of view given the interest I had in the military tremendously interesting to me.

*Q: Where did you go to college/university and what brought you to that?*

PICKERING: That was interesting. In my senior year I started looking around, got a lot of advice, was interested in Hobart and Trinity mainly because they had the Episcopal connection but also had an old family friend of my mother's and father's whose daughter was a contemporary of mine in high school who had been to Bowdoin, in Brunswick, Maine. He talked it up a lot and so I went up there and spent a weekend, also visited Hobart, never got to Trinity, got accepted by Bowdoin, it was my first preference mainly because of this weekend I had spent there and so decided to go there. I had also applied to Cornell to study mechanical engineering and was admitted. I still decided on Bowdoin and liberal arts.

*Q: It is interesting because Bowdoin, being stuck up in the wilds of Maine or something like that.*

PICKERING: That didn't bother me. I kind of romanticized the idea that Maine was a great outdoor state and that I had always enjoyed. I did a lot of camping, a lot of outdoor activities, and a lot of hiking. I enjoyed that so that problem wasn't there. I had grown up next to New York City, was not particularly interested in becoming an urban dweller and enjoyed the Bowdoin location.

*Q: So you went to Bowdoin from '49 to '53 was it?*

PICKERING: Exactly.

*Q: When you arrived there in '49 can you describe what your impression was of Bowdoin?*

PICKERING: Since I had been there before, I was not, I think greatly surprised by what I had found. I immediately, as all the students did, moved into a dorm and also went through a fraternity rush. Bowdoin was then almost completely fraternities, about 99 percent.

*Q: Would you repeat that last bit.*

PICKERING: Bowdoin was almost 99 percent fraternities; anybody who wanted to in effect could do it. There was one fraternity, which was not affiliated nationally, locally organized that had probably more Jewish students although my fraternity, which was nationally affiliated, pledged Jewish students in my class.

*Q: What fraternity was that?*

PICKERING: Theta Delta Chi. These were almost necessary for eating arrangements as well as housing. That was not the principal feature, and all new students lived in the dormitories when I was there. I ended up with a college roommate from just outside of Portland, who was French Canadian by origin.

*Q: Portland, Maine?*

PICKERING: Portland, Maine. We got along very well. He was a good athlete, played basketball, was a good science student, we pledged the same fraternity interestingly enough, although we were not particularly close throughout that time but we always remained friends and he became a physician later in life, a Navy physician.

*Q: Were you picking up any at that time at Bowdoin being in Maine the, I won't say necessary discrimination but the abruptness of the French Canadians?*

PICKERING: Very much. It was very apparent that Brunswick, which was a divided town between the Anglo-college piece and the old families and the French Canadians, the Quebecois who had come in over the last forty years or fifty years to work in the mills They were a first generation dying out, but it was interesting because I had learned a fair amount of French in high school and would go to local bars, we weren't supposed to but we always did, and find opportunities to speak French with some of the local people and get a sense of what a weird accent they had. We had a guy in my college class who had spent several summers working in Quebec who understood better than I did Quebec French. That was very much the case although we had increasing numbers from Maine in the college with French surnames. They were basically from the Maine point of view seen as a group apart. They never had any difficulty at Bowdoin, they never were in anyway un-integrated, but you always knew they came from the French Canadian community or the French speaking community. Some of them didn't speak French at all; some of them had totally lost it.



Bowden was interesting because it had also a very large group of excellent people who came out of the Maine school system mainly from the rural towns where they had a tradition of public/private academies. They got quite a good education and they were very broadly helped by Bowdoin scholarships, Bowdoin had a very large percentage of scholarship students. The college make up was about a third from Maine, a third from Massachusetts and a third from the rest of the world. That was sort of their vision of how the world was made up; it was kind of interesting. The Maine boys who came out of these small towns who also carried their weight without difficulty in class, sports and overall. We also had some very urban and urbane New Yorkers and Bostonians, lots of Boston suburb people, generally they were in economic strata sort of upper middle class, also lots of legacies. The college had good teaching, very solid fundamentals, a very broad requirement to go through the liberal arts -- language requirements, math requirements, science requirements, literature requirements, history requirements so you had a pretty well, a preset curriculum for your first couple of years and then you began to focus on what you would major in.

*Q: This was not a, although it was one of the, on a scale of things, one of the better schools. You didn't find it was a class school?*

PICKERING: Very much not. That was one of the nicest things. There were classes within the school but it was not a class school. It compared in that sense rather interestingly with places like Williams in Amherst and even Wesleyan, which even tended to be more class school.

*Q: I am a graduate of Williams in 1950 and I realized there was a classing. I didn't belong to it...*

PICKERING: I probably had a cousin in your class. Ted Chasteney? Did you ever hear that name?

*Q: It rings a bell, yeah. There was more of a class thing, as I say, I didn't come from anything that could purport to be part of the class and I in fact had always been a bit estranged from it because it just wasn't me. It was a good education but no, it is interesting that Bowdoin was much more of a...*

PICKERING: Bowdoin with the Maine background, there were very few, there were some Portland boys obviously from affluent families, but Maine was a place where you didn't wear that and didn't parade it and you didn't adopt accents, dress or manners that tended to put you in that circumstance.

*Q: Your first years, you say you're going through a rather stratified educational thing, how did you find this?*

PICKERING: Loved it. I found that I was extremely weak in English composition but not so weak that I had to take a remedial course. I found language a struggle in large measure because it was also totally based on literary French and I had had enough French, but I had to struggle through Moliere and other things, which to me were not very appealing or interesting with arcane formulations of archaic French verbs and totally antique. I loved history and I had a fabulous

professor who taught a one-year course in European history, which kind of settled me on my major. As I said, I enjoyed mathematics so much that instead of taking the second half of the year in statistics, which almost all non-mathematicians did, I, instead, stayed in for differential calculus and integral calculus because the professors were so good and I enjoyed very much the teaching although I've never used it. I found it was an extremely rewarding kind of approach and learned some logic in the process.

*Q: Well, did you in sort of later in life, could you relate at all to the way you looked at problems in all, is there a math...?*

PICKERING: I think there is a discipline in studying first trig and spherical geometry and then integral and differential calculus; one learned basically logic or certain logic in a way of dealing with a problem. You learned how to approach problems in a very orderly, very careful way and I think that helped as much as anything else.

*Q: Did you find, I mean, one of the things I've talked to many people who refer to you, served with you, refer to you in glowing terms but they say one of the problems with you was you could quickly read through things and absorb it very quickly and it was almost disconcerting but very handy. You were a very good study. Did you find this, was it an ability that you had or...?*

PICKERING: I didn't particularly notice it and you don't do a lot of problem solving in college. What I found was that when I had a choice of a major and then had to do kind of long written papers it was a challenge for me not having grown up in an academic environment to understand not only how to summarize your relation of events and then how to begin to draw conclusions from them. I had tremendously good professors who were very good at talking about and providing ways to look at issues and problems and drawing conclusions and the more seminars we did in this area the more I enjoyed it and perhaps because I enjoyed it maybe I learned something.

*Q: Were you noticing the influence of World War II veterans because starting in '49 you were picking up at the instructor level people who had been around the block and in World War II?*

PICKERING: Very much, but also my first year was the last year of the post-war veterans and we noticed basically that they were hard drinking, hard bitten, hard working, heavily focused and very mature. We were all young, green, wet between the ears fresh out of high school, very naïve, not very, very experience so the opportunity at least to spend a year with them in the fraternity house, not that I paid a lot of attention, was a kind of learning experience on its own but you had a huge generational gap.

*Q: I became by osmosis a veteran coming in out of a school in '46 and by the time I got out in '50 I later became a vet but I had already...*

PICKERING: Well, so did I but that was a noticeable period.

*Q: How about the instructors? Were you getting instructors who, for instance, had been involved...?*

PICKERING: Sure, one of the math instructors I had had been involved in the Second World War, had been a Rhoades Scholar at Oxford, never went beyond his masters interestingly enough but was a superb teacher of math. I got to know a lot of the instructors through classes and the fraternity. We had a chemistry professor who was particularly close to our fraternity; I had two wonderful history professors, the one who I told you about who did the European broad course...

*Q: Who was that?*

PICKERING: A man by the name of Ernst Helmreich and then I had a man by the name of Thomas Van Cleve, who was a colonel in the war interrogating German prisoners. He was a very senior expert on Germany, but his real field was Middle Ages, which I liked very much so I kind of did a major in the cultural history of the Middle Ages and Renaissance with Van Cleve. I had a wonderful man, in government, by the name of Athern Daggett who really started to encourage me to take the Foreign Service exam.

*Q: What about contemporary things? I mean by taking French class you weren't really Le Monde and things like that?*

PICKERING: No, and unfortunately we had very much a 19<sup>th</sup> Century view that this advance French was to prepare you to be a French instructor in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century tradition. I thought the government courses and the history tended to get you much more focused on what was happening in the modern world. I did a speech course in which we were asked to give speeches five minutes each time on something modern. I did an international law course in which he had a paper every week on some event or activity that had some relationship to international law so that gave you an opportunity to write about current events in international law. All of those things I think were much more modern and focused. I began in that period also to have an opportunity to branch out a little bit. I think about 1952, I was invited to a student conference at West Point and went and enjoyed it- a lot of focus on the cold war, a lot of focus on the cold war strategy. I met Steve Low who was then at Fletcher and Hayden Williams who was the dean of Fletcher and they encouraged me to look in that direction. I had been looking at it anyway and that helped to formulate my choice for graduate school.

*Q: When you were there on June 25, 1950, which was the seminal date for many of us, the start of the Korean War, did this get you thinking in terms of military again?*

PICKERING: Yes, college ended in early June. A group of people who had been in the old Boy Scout troop and had done their first year in college agreed that we would go back and run the summer camp I had told you about. We were right in the middle of that when the war broke out and of course we all ruminated a little about what it would mean. We had a couple of folks who were then already in the service who got pulled into Korea right away. The rest of us in college thought at least that while we were registered with the draft, we probably were going to continue to get deferments as long as we maintained academic standards.

*Q: Was there an attitude at Bowdoin or a challenge or was there a left wing at Bowden?*

PICKERING: Much less so than you might imagine and seemingly less than in today's colleges. I know that at Bowdoin, it was that way in the '60s, but in my time, it was pretty much a product of children, boys, brought up during the war (it was not yet coed) who basically as you know in the wartime atmosphere saw patriotism, service to the country and a lack of serious political dispute as a virtue. We were I think pretty somnolent about politics and about political life. I still felt very strongly that probably while Eisenhower was going to provide us a lot of benefits I had my suspicions inherited from my mother about the value of the Republican Party as a standard bearer for the country.

*Q: But Adelaide Stevenson caught an awful lot of people...*

PICKERING: He did and I was extremely attracted to him.

*Q: His rhetoric was really one of those few times when people became delighted in words and...*

PICKERING: I enjoyed that immensely. I thought that there were fewer people in the college however who did. Many of them who had come out of Republican families were kind of loyal to that and Eisenhower as the war hero had a huge amount of attraction and people were very comfortable at the college about his victory.

*Q: Was there much talk about finding out about communism and the Soviet Union?*

PICKERING: Very much and of course all through the war but in particularly later. For a while, of course, we were in the period of the honeymoon and Roosevelt's dealings with Stalin. Then after the war when it began to break down and some of the confrontation and difficulties over the occupation by the Soviets in the Eastern European countries, the Yalta argument, the tremendous polarization about China from 1949 on all brought on changed views. All of those I think were very much part of what we were watching and seeing and aware of.

*Q: Were you going through a sort of nuclear attack drills and that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Not in college and less in high school, although some in high school. I think everybody was profoundly impressed and even depressed about the potential for a nuclear attack, the potential for war, what to do in the event of war. They were much more optimistic in the basis of government exhortations about duck and cover and air raid shelters and those kinds of things, about what would happen had we had an atomic attack. There was this combination of this very fearful weapon with government encouragement to do what was basically homeopathic medicine to deal with it and so we were if anything somewhat confused

We were happy in Maine. We thought we were not going to be a target until Korea opened up and then what had been a very large, then closed, Naval Air Station in Maine in Brunswick, was reopened by the Navy. It had been part of the college, both the University of Maine and Bowdoin for their freshman years during the early post war period. We wondered whether we would be a target or not.

*Q: Was there an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp) or anything like that?*

PICKERING: Interestingly enough about my second year, after 1950, Bowdoin established an ROTC. To the disappointment of many it was the Transportation Corps, they all thought it was going to be something more glamorous.

*Q: It wasn't one you could...*

PICKERING: One that you were going to go fight for. A number of folks, mainly incoming freshman, not too many in my class joined up and stayed for the whole period and actually some went on to serve in the Transportation Corp. Some even became lifers. In my class there wasn't so much of that; we were too close to the veterans and too far from the Transportation Corps. If I could put it that way to look at it but we all knew that we would have to serve. I can remember as a junior maybe or a senior, the Navy came by recruiting and my eyes were fine and so I signed up as being interested in a Naval aviation flight program which sort of set the stage. I then went to graduate school which we will talk about and spent a year in Australia and then came back and took the physical for the Navy in London on my way home. When I got there my eyes were deteriorated from this wonderful graduate school education, but got married and went into the Navy in an aviation ground officer program, which was really an aviation intelligence program and did photo interpretation with my wonderful eyes. But, it all started back at Bowdoin in the Naval aviation program.

*Q: Israel became independent in '48.*

PICKERING: Right.

*Q: Obviously repercussions for you much later but did Israel, the cause of Israel, or anything attract you?*

PICKERING: No it didn't figure extremely largely or in necessarily a totally subliminal way. I think we were aware of it as a development. I think basically those of us, who lived through the war, knew about the Holocaust, understood some of what had happened to Jews around the world but particularly in Europe were not at all disappointed that they could have a state.

*Q: How about the UN (United Nations)? When I was in college, '46-'50, the UN was a big thing, this is considered to be the light of the future.*

PICKERING: It was and there were world federalists and people saw the UN as kind of a step forward for world government. There were great interests but there were, what I would call, a kind of counter veiling public image that it was the place where we entered into long debilitating, feckless debate with the Soviets over the future of whatever it was we were trying to deal with. It had become veto ridden by the early 50's. The UN was a wonderful mechanism for dealing with Korea because the Soviets disappeared for a week, or whatever. We saw the UN Command in Korea turn into the coalition and those kinds of things. We began to get a sense of what the UN was doing in other areas, the specialized agencies, some of us learned to little bit more about it. I spent a lot of my time in graduate school on the subject and my future wife even more.

*Q: Was there China, there was a split that was '49 too?*

PICKERING: I mean I think the stereotypical view of China was that the Communists had won the civil war with a tremendous amount of help from Russia, that the two were glued together very, very closely but one was the cat's paw, the Chinese for the Russians for the Soviets. This then led to the difficult and messy war in Korea when we got too close to the Yalu River and brought the Chinese in then too there were huge recriminations in the Congress about 'who lost China'. The Democrats bore the bulk of the burden on that particular question. We were close to the Republic of China and Taiwan. There were some arguing for opening up with the PRC, the treatment of our diplomats was an issue, the inability to have communication was an issue. It took a long while before any of us realized that there were some fundamental differences between Chinese and Russians over the future.

*Q: McCarthyism, did this stir up anything?*

PICKERING: Hugely important, very closely followed. By the time I went to the Fletcher School in '54 we had the Army-McCarthy hearings going on as we were in school. I watched them all very, very closely. By that time I had already taken the Foreign Service exam, I took it in '53, but we saw in fact McCarthy's efforts had clamped an iron vise around the front door to the State Department for new Foreign Service Officers. We more or less thought it was a forlorn effort, but it wasn't until the end of graduate school that I was suddenly invited to Washington to take oral exams.

*Q: You graduated in '53 you took the Foreign Service exam.*

PICKERING: I took the Foreign Service exam in the summer of '53. I was home and in New York and there was a big Civil Service exam center in Canal Street and I had to get across to do that. I, in fact, arrived late the second day of the exam. There were three-day exams in those days.

*Q: It was actually three and a half days.*

PICKERING: Yes, three and a half and I arrived late but managed to poke my score up for some...

*Q: I took it the same year.*

PICKERING: Did you?

*Q: In Frankfurt, Germany. I was in the Air Force at the time.*

PICKERING: It was an interesting experience. I thought I had done reasonably well and in fact I did. I think I was in the low 70s.

*Q: I was I think 69.85 or something. It was rounded up to 70 so I got into the Foreign Service.*

PICKERING: I even passed the French exam, which I think was a score of 70.

*Q: Why did you take the Foreign Service exam?*

PICKERING. Well, over my college years I had become a great deal more interested in knowing what was going on around the world. I did a lot of study and focus on it, loved to travel. In 1952, the U.S. Weather Bureau recruited students at Bowdoin and Dartmouth principally to spend a summer in Greenland and in Arctic Canada, maintaining weather stations. I succeeded in that, spent most of the month of July in South Boston at the South Boston Naval Shipyard alongside the Dry Dock putting together all of this stuff to go to Greenland and Arctic Canada and then went on a Navy Attack Transport both to Halifax, Gothab in Greenland (now Nuuk) where we had an American Consulate General in those days. We went on to Thule and then stayed. After a week in Thule. some of us got off the ship. I stayed and I went on over to Cornwallis Island in the Canadian Arctic to Resolute Bay and spent until September there when I had to come back to college.

*Q: What were you doing?*

PICKERING: We essentially helped to put up pre-fabricated buildings for the weather stations, which were already established, drove bulldozers to grade roads, did electrical wiring, whatever they wanted us to do. When we finished I spent about three weeks there. Another guy from Dartmouth and I did a lot of walking on a trip on Cornwallis Island camping.

*Q: What's Cornwallis Island? What was there?*

PICKERING: Three things of interest, a Canadian Air Force gravel landing field with some wrecked airplanes and a small Canadian Air Force station and our weather station, which was joint U.S.-Canadian off on one end on a big bay. About 18 miles away the winter camp of Sir John Franklin's 1853 expedition before it disappeared in the Northwest Passage. There was an archeological site off one end of the runway of an Inuit habitation maybe 500 years old which still had bone and animal skin remains frozen in the ground. There were no Intuits in 1952 in Resolute Bay. It was a wonderful place to walk around; we had the first snow at the end of August. There were plentiful polar bears and walrus. They wouldn't let us walk out of camp without taking an old Enfield 1903 rifle and ammunition with us, which we shot not at bears but to listen to the sound occasionally.

*Q: Later, I've talked to people who have been with you on bird watching trips. Did...*

PICKERING: I am not a bird watcher but I did take bird watchers along on trips.

*Q: I've never understood it as a hobby but they are fanatic about this.*

PICKERING: Very.

*Q: What about the Foreign Service exam was this just sort of "Oh, what the hell", I mean it was three and one half days. You had to be serious about it.*

PICKERING: No, it was more serious. I think I was working that year in a Lyndhurst, New Jersey, in a warehouse, which specialized in special steels: bars, rods and shapes. I found the job with a friend because we were walking around looking for a job and came to this warehouse and said, "Would you take a couple of us to help out?" and they said "Yeah, we need somebody", so it was that kind of thing. I spent my nights at home reading documents, the UN Charter, boning up on my course studies, looking at French, looking at a lot of things because we all knew about this wonderful part of the exam that tested general knowledge and my mother was a great opera fan so we spent time talking opera, music, compositions, literature, those kinds of things so I could do what I could to attack this exam when it came along.

*Q: I studied for the opera because I didn't know anything about it and as I recall I don't think I got a question on it.*

PICKERING: I think I got some. But, it was serious and I was interested but I also knew that I wanted to do graduate school and I had been admitted to Fletcher in the one year MA (Master of Arts) course. While I was at Fletcher, the Foreign Service because of the McCarthy actions things looked pretty hopeless and so I applied early on for a Fulbright to Australia. I had passed the written. Then the oral came through and I passed that.

*Q: When did you take the orals?*

PICKERING: October '54, about two weeks before I went to get on the boat to go to Australia.

*Q: We will continue this and then we will come back to Fletcher. Do you recall any of the questions?*

PICKERING: In the oral?

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: Not too many. I think they asked me broad questions about foreign policy and the world and what was happening on those issues, some historical questions. I enjoyed it, it was in a building called Building H, which was on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and geographically just probably next to the northern wing of the State Department building now -- it was in that area.

*Q: It was a two story barracks, temporary.*

PICKERING: A two-story like barracks, temporary.

*Q: Probably Cornwall Riches was head of the...*

PICKERING: He was, I remember the name very well. I don't think he was in the examining panel. I did know, at one time remembered, who was on the examining panel, but it was all serving Foreign Service officers, all World War II vets mainly.



*Q: Fletcher. Fletcher wasn't as well known when you went there as later it was.*

PICKERING: Probably true, but none of the schools -- I think -- the advanced schools in foreign affairs were not terribly well known. I think Georgetown because it's here in town, Woodrow Wilson because it was connected with Princeton and then SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies) were coming up.

*Q: Why Fletcher? I mean how did you hear about Fletcher?*

PICKERING: As I said, Steve Low was a student there and I met Hayden Williams and they encouraged me to take a look at it. I can't remember whether I applied to other schools or not. They admitted me and offered me not a generous scholarship but a scholarship that helped and so I decided that it looked like an interesting place and it looked like interesting courses and interesting faculty and so I went.

*Q: You were there from '53-'54 was it?*

PICKERING: Yeah. Actually I was there from September '53 until June of '54, it was the one-year course.

*Q: So what were you taking and how did you find it?*

PICKERING: I liked it, I took international law with Ernest Gross who was a phenomenon in his own right. A Viennese, tremendously demanding, we had volumes to read, huge amounts but he was also an extremely interesting lecturer and seminar instructor. I took American diplomatic history with a man by the name of Ruhl Bartlett who had written several volumes on the subject. I took a serious course in international economics with Harry Hopkins who had been a trade negotiator for the United States at the end of the Second World War. Then I took a course, I think the second semester in British Commonwealth History with the man who was then Dean of the University of Melbourne Law School, Zelman Cowan, who later became master of an Oxford college but even more significantly Governor General of Australia. He was the one who encouraged me to look at Australia for my Fulbright. I took an excellent course with a Taiwanese in Chinese Diplomatic History in which I learned a huge amount.

*Q: I was wondering were you picking up something that might be called a Chinese approach to diplomacy?*

PICKERING: Not really, but what I got from him were several things. One, an appreciation of China's view of its own position in the world. A traditional view of China in a diplomatic environment and the history of the horrors of principally the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in what one could only have to call the rape and the opening of China at the hands of the Europeans and the Japanese. He was a little more comfortable with the United States but not an awful lot. It was interesting because he pulled no punches even though he was Republic of China (Taiwan) they very much saw themselves as the center of China, part of the world of the future and he talked about it from a very Chinese perspective.

*Q: Did this sort of stick in your mind?*

PICKERING: A huge amount did. As you know, I never spent a lot of time in the Far East but some of the things he had to say I thought were so new, so interesting and so illustrative of cultural variations that they stuck in my mind.

*Q: In the period you are coming up China did not loom large in the academic world.*

PICKERING: No it didn't and I think that's why in fact this young guy who is over working on a PhD from Taiwan had this really interesting course and Fletcher was probably wise enough and daring enough to present it.

*Q: How about your students, your fellow students, where were they from?*

PICKERING: About one-third or more from all over the world and about two-thirds or less from American undergraduate institutions with maybe out of a total of 70, 15-20 PhD candidates who were there for a second year.

*Q: Were you rubbing shoulders with them were you getting quite a bit from them?*

PICKERING: Sure and I married one.

*Q: I was going to ask about the significant other coming along. What was her name and what's her background?*

PICKERING: Her name is Alice Jean Stover and she was born in 1931 in western Pennsylvania in a little town called Sharon, Pennsylvania. An extremely good student, she was valedictorian of her high school and went to Swarthmore on scholarship. She had her own kind of reaction to Swarthmore. I think that she reacted to Swarthmore more negatively than I reacted to Bowdoin. Then she spent a summer abroad and then came back into Fletcher. She was such a good student and she got a full scholarship from Fletcher. We lived next door to each other in separate houses. There was a ladies house and a men's house. There were fewer women; we all ate together. We got to know each other and didn't get married until I came back from Australia and she had completed a year with USIS (United States Information Service) in Holland.

*Q: How did she feel about Swarthmore? I'm just curious.*

PICKERING: I think she liked Swarthmore but she found many of the student's highly competitive, more urbanized New Yorker types than she from a small town in western Pennsylvania was comfortable with. Nevertheless, I think she was class vice president and editor for a while of the newspaper. She was very career oriented, very competitive and held up her own in Swarthmore very well but still felt that she somehow was from a rural area and out of touch.

*Q: What about grad school, I can't remember the name all of a sudden.*

PICKERING: Fletcher.

*Q: Fletcher. Did you find, was there, was this the beginning of sort of coming into the professional ranks and all?*

PICKERING: It was beginning and I, I think, kind of sense of competition with the women. In fact, they were all good enough to push us all pretty hard. We had a lot of people who were headed to the Foreign Service. It was very interesting that Fletcher almost radically changed in the 60's to a school that is much more oriented to the business community. A lot of our foreign fellow students were headed for their foreign services. Fletcher had for quite a while all of the new intake for Pakistan's foreign service at School, all eight! My roommate was an Indian, I think maybe one of the few Indians ever to go to Fletcher. An extremely interesting and able man who had grown up in the Indian independence movement where he spent time in prison. He was ten years at least older than I was and had been number one in the Indian civil service exam which is a huge accomplishment and opted for the foreign service and was good enough for them to send to Fletcher.

*Q: Did you pick up anything about, I always think of the Bet Noir of the American Foreign Service Krishna Menon.*

PICKERING: No, I don't think he knew Krishna Menon, but later on when I worked with Ron Spiers. Ron had worked with Krishna Menon at the UN in New York at one time. I remember at one point in Geneva we all had dinner together.

*Q: After graduating from there, at first place Foreign Service wasn't really open, the American Foreign Service at this period.*

PICKERING: No, we spent the time watching the Army-McCarthy hearings wondering what might happen. Maybe in June or maybe after I left Fletcher I got summoned to appear for orals in October and went down my first time ever in Washington. My wife was, wife to be, had already left for Holland, She had spent the summer doing the equivalent of USIA's (United States Information Agency) A-100 in those days. I stayed with Fletcher friends for a night and took the orals then not knowing what would happen and they announced to me right away that I had passed and I could start in January. I said, "Oops, I have only two impediments: I've accepted the Fulbright Scholarship which I think will be valuable and then I have to do military service." They said "It's ok, we will keep your name on the register" which they faithfully did.

*Q: Then you had a Fulbright and you say you were sort of talked into it, not talked into it but were sold on it by the man who came from Australia.*

PICKERING: What happened was less that than just picking the place. I had taken a look at a Fulbright. I thought that probably given my past studies and what I wanted to do I was better equipped to work in an English speaking country and looked at the Commonwealth. I frankly wanted to take a look at the development of foreign affairs powers and recognized that this had been evolutionary in the Commonwealth and that it was then easy to make a decision for the following reason. Canada was too close; South Africa was too occupied with apartheid and other

problems to be able to look at the subject I wanted to look at. New Zealand was much too small, India had just become independent and was preoccupied in other areas therefore it hadn't evolved as the dominions had and Australia was the perfect case. Australia also represented an opportunity to go as far away from home as one could get, not that I disliked home, but I loved travel and it gave me an opportunity to organize a trip around the world if I was intelligent about it and so I went ahead and did that.

In the meantime, I had met this guy from Melbourne who I thought was a superb teacher, a very interesting guy, and so I said, "I've applied for a Fulbright, or I am applying I guess or whatever where should I go?" He said, "Come to Melbourne," and he said, "We can offer you this and this." Well, he didn't have to offer me anything because in Australia in those days graduate study didn't exist. To do a MA in Australia you had to write a thesis but there was no course work. So, I outlined this thesis and in somebody's fit of absentmindedness they offered me the program and so I went off to Australia and sat and talked. The man I wanted to work with was an Australian political scientist by the name of McMahon Ball whom I never met because by the time I got there he had gone off for a year at Oxford which was the nirvana for every Australian professor. But I worked with a very able assistant of his for a year and Zelman Cowen was even kind enough to read the first few chapters of my thesis. I did a thesis and left it at Melbourne and they awarded me a degree after I had come back to the US.

*Q: What was the thrust of your thesis?*

PICKERING: My thesis was really to take the evolution of the foreign affairs power through the Australian colonies and then in the Commonwealth up to its full acquisition of control over its foreign affairs in 1945. It was interesting because you could study the colonies and how they began to be represented overseas in trade matters. Then when Australia became a united Commonwealth in 1900, you could begin to look at the dominion conferences and how the British gradually, at least for the lily white dominions, began to give more opportunity to conduct foreign relations. Then finally came the famous Westminster Acts of the 1930s where they got more of this power and then began to establish some relationships, the first of which for Australia was to send someone here in the British Embassy in 1940.

*Q: In the first place, looking at this as an American would be an interesting perspective because we had a little difficulty with the British back in the 1770's over just this issue. Did you find that you had a different approach than someone else would?*

PICKERING: As an American writer in history?

*Q: Yes.*

PICKERING: Perhaps, partly because I was interested in the kind of evolutionary nature. It gave you a way of kind of doing a taxonomy of foreign affairs powers in an evolutionary sense. It was very unusual because in fact almost every state to achieve independence since then has emerged with full power, but it was interesting to see what the British did and how they managed it. It was diplomatic history in what I would call the de-colonization of the white dominions from the perspective of the foreign affairs power and its growth. Many of these colonies didn't want

foreign affairs powers for a while but we watched the growth of local nationalism in particularly in Australia after the first World War and how they wanted it. They distrusted the British and those concerns were actually growing and the Second World War made it an imperative from the Australian perspective to run their own foreign affairs.

*Q: I would think after, in World War II there would be a lot of resentment because they sent the flower of their army off to North Africa...*

PICKERING: North Africa and Italy.

*Q: And what was left of it went to Singapore. The British didn't handle it very well.*

PICKERING: The British played their cards where they thought they had to play them and the Australians were their cards to play more or less. The Australians were left high and dry with the Japanese in Papua New Guinea and bombing Darwin and only the Americans between them and a Japanese invasion.

*Q: I suppose you found the Battle of the Coral Sea which for us is almost a blimp on the thing there but for the Australians it is a big thing so when the Americans saved Australian...*

PICKERING: It was huge and in fact one of the public events I did I was asked to give a speech on Australian/American relations in the Battle of Coral Sea Commemoration in Melbourne in 1954.

*Q: How did you find, were you aware, you were sort of being recruited as an American and as students up there come up and talking about those horrible "Pommies" and...*

PICKERING: Not often. I mean there was clearly in that period particularly with Australians after the war still a sense of attachment to the Commonwealth and the UK...

*Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: Australia in 1954 was still pretty close to the war. People disparaged the British but they had for many years before calling them "Pommies" for pomegranates.

*Q: Is that where it came from?*

PICKERING: Probably in the kind of completion the British took on under the Australian sun almost immediately. It resembled pomegranite fruit's outer skin -- bright, darkish red.

*Q: Red.*

PICKERING: Bright red! But Australia in those days (1954) was still so close to what I would call the pre-World War I years or certainly the '30s in almost every aspect because everything stopped during the Depression and then Second World War. The automobiles, the construction, the architecture with rare exceptions that had begun to pull out of this long freeze that they had

undergone took you back in time and in space to an earlier almost Victorian era. So it was an opportunity to look at kind of a frozen Australia. But Australia in those days too had many of the kind of attributes, -the strong orientation to what was happening in the country. There was the long deep history of agricultural Australia and mining Australian as opposed to urban Australia, a tremendous interest in that period in poetry from the high Victorian days about Australia, complimentary and uncomplimentary, an admiration of the bandits and outlaws that had been part of Australian history and an almost total sublimation of the convicts and penal colony past.

*Q: Ned Kelly.*

PICKERING: Ned Kelly, the wandering agricultural worker -- swagmen -- all of that so you got a feel for Australia that I don't think you could capture today in modern Australia and it was extremely interesting. I can remember the road system was very rudimentary and so driving from Melbourne to Canberra was almost a two-day trip. You had to be prepared to cook out on the way, you had to be prepared for intense heat and uncountable flies, and it was tough. Hotels and living conditions in Australia were pretty primitive.

*Q: Did you find something that I've talked to people who, when I was in Vietnam our guys went on R&R (Rest and Relaxation) said it was really great because all the Australian guys went off and drank in pubs leaving these gorgeous women sort of unattended, they had a wonderful time.*

PICKERING: Yes, my day was even pre that. In Australia, we had six o'clock closing throughout the country. Only half-way through my time did New South Wales take the gigantic step of staying open until ten o'clock. Women were not allowed in the men's lounge and all the drinking was done in the men's bar which had no seats. It was everybody standing up. People got out of work and went in for the six o'clock swill and beer was served with hoses with nozzles from glass to glass and everybody sort of stored up for the six o'clock closing and then all stumbled home. It was as country of a lot of alcoholism, much of it pretty primitive because the culture seemed then to impose it. The other thing was that was unusual was that nothing was open for drinking on Sunday except country places and if you traveled more than 12 miles -- a fair horse journey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century -- as a bona fide traveler, you could always get a drink on Sunday. So they had a lot of these archaic laws still, which should have long since disappeared.

*Q: Did you find a sort of the academic side that you know of was this pretty much a reflection of the Oxbridge system or not?*

PICKERING: I was totally on my own. I had again a roommate who shared a couple of rooms out in a far suburb of Melbourne along a major trolley line. He was already a PhD, a scientist in botany and I learned a lot from him about plant RNA and DNA which were his focus and brand new. I was admitted to the Faculty Club because I was a graduate student and so got to know a lot of the faculty very well, many of them in the area of science because they worked in the lab with my friend. I was pretty much told that if you want to write a thesis you are free to do that, go do it and so I organized my outline, my research, access to the library, my own working arrangements, my own travel, my visits to Canberra to look at the archives and those kinds of things as I pretty much wanted. It was a terrific experience in becoming a self-starter.

*Q: It wasn't like the tutor system of the dons?*

PICKERING: No, there were no seminars, no tutors, no dons for people interested in an MA. I had a professor I talked to and I must have talked to him four times in my entire time there about what I was doing and where I was going and he said, "Sure, it sounds right."

*Q: You came away from Australia, what sort of impressions did you have of the Australians?*

PICKERING: I had impressions of many different facets of Australian life. For instance, the preoccupation with what they still called 'home', which was UK even if they had never been there. The size of the large cities was impressive and so was the strong annual migration to Europe for education, travel and release. Australia was in many ways a pre-modern urban area without much to recommend it. You had to be pretty sports-minded to enjoy it. I can remember spending a lot of time, it was almost free, to watch really high-grade Australian tennis, which I enjoyed very much. I learned to watch cricket at Melbourne University and understand a little bit about it, Australian rules football and the horse races, but beyond that there was very little else going on in Australia -- a little music, not much art, a few beginning of aboriginal art becoming popular, a tremendous fascination with Australia's World War I history and the biggest days were Anzac Day parades which went for hours. But, you got a sense at least that the country was unified around a single theme. Strong debates and fears about Asia and strong debate as to whether Australia was really an Asian country and its future was in better relations with Asia which the academic community and the universities pushed as against all these other people with a close ties and attention to 'home'.

Overlaid over this was at least five years of post war immigration from East, South and Central Europe and you had people as different as Greeks, Maltese and Yugoslavs coming into the 'white only' environment. It meant that these folks had a really hard go and it was before they really had an opportunity to introduce their own food, their own cooking, their own neighborhoods, their own clubs, their own churches and so they were very much at sea. They were doing mainly manual work with a few beginning to do professional things. The Australians found them queer and unusual and somewhat strange and hard to get to know. A big barrier existed and it was hard to see that breaking down in a hurry between these new migrants which Australia was pushing very hard to get for basically political and security reasons and strong debates still over white Australia and the older migrants from the 19<sup>th</sup> century mainly from Britain and Ireland. It was totally assumed that this would be white Australia forever. While you had a few odd colonies of Chinese who had come in the 1840s to pan for gold living in Melbourne and Sydney, the Chinatown, most of them were totally Australianized in their speech, even if they were Chinese in their looks, customs and in their food.

*Q: Did the United States, there was a sympathy or whatever it is, appreciation for what the United States had done during the war, but had this much effect on Australia?*

PICKERING: It had and as a young American student at a time when the American troops had been gone for nine years, people were almost unconscionably friendly in welcoming and treated me as if I were a war hero -- certainly, to say nothing of at least terribly interested in meeting me. Australian friends that I made on the boat when I went out who lived in Melbourne entertained

us with frequently extended invitations to see them and that kind of thing. We stayed in touch for years by correspondence. That part of Australia was extremely easy and a great deal of fun. I did a lot of traveling around Australia -- as much as I could with a very limited budget. I went to Sydney and people had given me the names of their family friends and they were very hospitable and I stayed with them. I in fact hitchhiked between Sydney and Brisbane which was not terribly easy. I got around to other parts of Australian and then actually when I left took the train from Melbourne to Perth to pick up the boat. I never got to the Northern Territories but I did get to see a lot of the outback by car.

*Q: Ok, well this is a good place to stop. I'll put at the end of the tape where we are so we can play it back to see.*

PICKERING: Ok, we'll go from Australia.

*Q: Tom, we will pick this up in 1954, I guess, when you're back to the military.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Ok, we will do that.*

*Q: All right, today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2003. Tom, in '54 you came back and I guess the military was waiting with open embrace?*

PICKERING: Yes, but even more interestingly, I proposed to my wife by phone in July of 1954. She was serving in The Hague as a USIS officer -- junior officer trainee. That was a wonderful phone call because in those days the operator had to repeat the proposal and then provide the answer which was positive. We arranged to get married in Europe and were married on Thanksgiving Day in 1955. I can never remember the date, my wife claims because its easy to remember Thanksgiving Day. We had a double-barreled ceremony because of the Dutch civil code you have to get married in a town hall to be legal and we also wanted to be married as well in church. We were married in what was the new city hall in Den Hague and then in the Anglican Church also in The Hague near the Peace Palace.

Then we went off for six weeks in Europe. With my wife's consummate negotiating skills we managed to both sell her car and drive it on the trip and keep the money to pay for it all. We went all the way down to Sicily and back in December, arriving back in Holland just in time to take the Queen Mary home from Southampton in the UK. In the meantime in a brief stopover in London on the way to the boat, I took the physical exam for the U.S. Navy and found that my eyes had deteriorated sufficiently and couldn't go to flight school. But the Navy then arranged to make me an aviation ground officer and promised me that I would get an intelligence assignment.

*Q: I don't know if we have covered it or not but can you tell me the background of your wife?*

PICKERING: Yeah, she...



*Q: About her family a little?*

PICKERING: She was born and grew up in western Pennsylvania, Sharon, which is right opposite Youngstown, Ohio, actually on the Pennsylvania/Ohio border. Her father and mother were both school teachers. From what little I know about the rest of her family, her grandfather on her mother's side was a Pennsylvania railroad employee. She did well in school, as schoolteachers' children generally do, unless they go bad. Her father also worked as an accountant, he taught accountancy and so they had a private accounting business. She managed with ease to get into Swarthmore among other schools and went to Swarthmore on a scholarship for four years and then got a scholarship to go to the Fletcher School, which is where we met. Each of us decided at the end of our first year that we would go do separate things but stay in touch which we did. Australia got pretty lonely in July and I proposed at that point. She has a brother who became a dentist, and then a successful orthodontist, in Sharon, Pa.

*Q: You were in the Navy from when to when?*

PICKERING: I entered the Navy on the 31st of January 1956 and I went in for three years and four months -- four months of OCS (Officer Candidate School) and three years of active duty as an officer. I left the Navy at the end of May 1959.

*Q: Let's talk a little bit about your military career. How did basic training and all that, I mean officer training suit you?*

PICKERING: I liked the military. I was an active Boy Scout so I suppose I fit in at least emotionally and mentally very well. My basic training was essentially Officer's Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island, where I learned quickly of the rudiments of marching and rapid learning of naval subjects actually. It was quite an interesting experience because we were expected to absorb in four months the central rudiments of what they taught brighter people at the Naval Academy in four years.

*Q: This wasn't even a 90-day wonder, was it?*

PICKERING: It was a 120-day wonder.

*Q: 120-day wonder.*

PICKERING: In those days we went in as Seamen Apprentice, which is the next lowest, Seamen Recruit, in the Navy. We wore bell-bottomed trousers with 13 buttons on a large flap in front and typical Navy blouses with white starred and striped collars as I remember. We had our first six weeks totally incarcerated and then we were able to get a little bit of leave on a Saturday or a Sunday, usually around Newport. I learned quickly a lot of the tricks. You made your bed once and for all and slept on a blanket on top of it and that you kept everything in your locker beautifully folded where it ought to be and hid away anything you wore or was dirty in terms of laundry.

*Q: Did you have a pair of shiny shoes, which were purely for display at least?*

PICKERING: We did. We also had to wear endlessly shined boondockers which was a real problem and we had to do those every night and so a good part of your night work was getting your shoes shined. But also you had to do a lot of reading, almost more than you could accomplish. It was a taxing task. I enjoyed most of the material and most of the material I found fairly easy to absorb. As I told you I'd almost gone a technical route in college so this was reasonably friendly stuff. One of the great trials was that every Friday afternoon you were locked in a big barracks like instruction hall with a drawing table, charts and a whole series of navigational problems you had to undertake. And when you got to the position where you could understand and compute star sights, you had to do those. Then you had to lay them out along the course and this was a kind of exam because at each stage you filled in a paper as to where you were and then went on to the next one position. Once lost you rarely recovered! You were graded on your success or failure in navigation- in mastering those techniques, the tables and the maps, with plotting the star sights -- all on paper and on charts.

*Q: Did one continue on the others? You could end up way off or could you start over again?*

PICKERING: Oh sure, yes. The easier ones were first with coastal piloting and then you began to do things with fixes at sea. If you screwed up in one place you could magnify it at other places. It required a lot of fairly careful and meticulous work.

*Q: So you were in the aviation branch?*

PICKERING: I was an aviation ground officer reserve and they had told me when I came in that since I was interested in world affairs and those kinds of things they would give me an opportunity in the aviation ground branch to be either an air intelligence officer or a photo interpreter or both. It just so happened that when I graduated they had a photo interpreter course starting here in Anacostia, in Washington. When I left OCS and I did rather well, I think I was the second person in my class, about which I was a little bit shocked and surprised, I came to Washington.

*Q: Made you wonder about it.*

PICKERING: Made you wonder about it. I came down here and took a little leave and found a place to live where the Thai Embassy is now located at the lower end of Wisconsin Avenue just under the freeway not having recognized that I rented the place on a Sunday when the local rendering works were not spewing out nasty odors.

*Q: The smell.*

PICKERING: The smell.

*Q: The smell does not emanate.*

PICKERING: In the building. -- the famous sign off the Whitehurst Freeway "The smell in this area does not originate in this building". and it was unairconditioned, we were in mid-summer

but we survived. I commuted every day across the South Capitol Street Bridge to a Navy temporary building from the Second World War just on the left hand side as you go across the bridge in what's now a public park and a Metro car park. This was the Navy's photo interpretation center training establishment and I found it fascinating. We spent I think 16 or 20 weeks there and a lot of it with Korean War vintage military photography, We did a lot of industrial analysis, and we did a lot of things that gave us a tremendous opportunity to know and understand all kinds of processes, activities and things going on around you.

*Q: The idea of building up so if you saw something in a picture you could understand what it was up to?*

PICKERING: Exactly. To be able to take a look at an industrial plant and then analyze its elements and tell somebody what this was, was it an oil refinery or a zinc refinery? We spent a lot of time looking at things like the old Potomac Railway yards, which used to cover half of northern Alexandria and Arlington. They took us for a visit. We went through an ESSO refinery, somewhere up around Baltimore, and went to look at the Sparrows Point Bethlehem steel works on Baltimore Harbor which was then belching out smoke all over Baltimore. But it gave you a great opportunity to know and understand what was happening in this kind of photography as well as an awful lot of combat photography, pictures of anti-aircraft sites and things of that sort.

*Q: This was about the time when we were just getting into, well some life photograph really.*

PICKERING: Actually before.

*Q: Was it before or...*

PICKERING: Actually, it was extremely interesting because we had been working on the U-2 program and this was an especially compartmented intelligence program which none of us knew about, although people who would engage with us came over and encouraged us to believe that we had picked a good field and things would be interesting in this field without giving us anything more to go on. In the meantime, we were kind of stuck with World War II and Korean War imagery to look at and got to know all of that very, very well.

*Q: Well then what did they do with you after you...?*

PICKERING: Well, after I finished that course they assigned me to a course in radar photography which was very new in those days but we used radar in the Navy's equivalent of the B-66 (A3D), a twin-engine jet carrier -based bomber with a capability of bombing by radar. We learned to interpret radar photography

*Q: Was that the Canberra?*

PICKERING: No, Canberra was the B-59 a WWII propeller driven plane, this is the A3-D. It was a twin-engined, then fairly modern jet bomber which had a radar bombing device and interestingly enough because we had no radar photography of the targets we learned how to take visual photography, scale the heights, that is actually outline the buildings by height on the photograph of the city or the districts by height and use that to make a template which was then

actually manufactured out of radar reflecting material in a very small scale which you could then put in water and with a sonar device create a radar like image of the city. I don't think this was classified, but we did that for Baltimore. We all struggled over that. Happily they never made us go and take photography and do that from the ground up, but we learned the technology and we learned roughly interpreting radar photography in terms of what the returns might be so that we had some idea of what the bombardier/navigator in these airplanes would be looking at as he looked at a target.

*Q: Then did...*

PICKERING: Then I was assigned overseas.

*Q: Where did you go?*

PICKERING: Well I went to Morocco where we had a Naval Air Station co-located with a French Naval Air Station. Morocco had become independent I think in '56 and I arrived there in February '57. We had a U.S. Navy Intelligence Center to support the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean there. Later it moved to Rota in Spain when we closed down in Morocco and then back to Norfolk, Virginia. I was assigned to an area that produced target folders for the Sixth Fleet pilots who had targets mainly in the Balkans. It was quite interesting again when I arrived I learned one of the great rules in the Navy which was I wrote a memorandum after I got there and said that we have a room full of photographs taken by the Germans and the British in the Second World War of the Balkans but none of it is available for us to use with our pilots because it's never been catalogued It had never been put on templates over a map so you know where to go to find the photographs that you want. I was a young Ensign and was immediately assigned the task with two Navy Chief Quartermasters and we spent three or four months taking this photography and putting it on overlays on the map and then producing a large book so that the folks in our center and the Navy in the Sixth Fleet could ask us for pictures of any particular place that they wanted. It all happened to be in those days fifteen or twenty years old, but much of it was received without any indication of where it was originally taken. They just knew it was in the Balkans somewhere. The three of us got to be very familiar from the air with the towns and villages all over Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Albania and could pretty much after a time could pick out a photo and tell you where it was just be looking at the towns.

*Q: I interviewed somebody who said he was with the same outfit with you, Captain Jenkins or somebody or is that, I don't know who it was but somebody I can't think who was in the...*

PICKERING: Could be.

*Q: At that time what was the feeling? We had just gone through the October '56 crisis with Hungary and with the Suez Canal and all.*

PICKERING: That all happened when I was in school back here in the States.

*Q: I was wondering whether the feeling was "geez something could happen"?*

PICKERING: There always was. I think there was always the feeling that something could happen. There was a kind of hope that it wasn't going to happen but feeling that it was possible, even likely to happen. I think that it was sensed on our part that at least we would get the Navy part of the process in shape, which didn't seem to be in very good order. The pilots went out in the fleet and had a map and that was about all they had to get to their targets. The Navy photo and patrol squadrons took pictures for us all along the coastal areas leading up to the Balkans so that we could find initial points or landmarks for pilots flying in visually. They could take these with them in the cockpit and look at them as well as using the older photographs just to show them what the target areas looked like. After a while we began then to get products out of the U2 and I was indoctrinated into that and so we would take those old pictures and look at the U2 photos and try and give them a sense of whether they were still valid or not. If we could, we would give them some drawings to update things that had radically changed. It was kind of interesting.

*Q: Did you get any feeling were we playing, I mean, there was a U2 program but there was another program of, I don't know that would be '47 or so...*

PICKERING: It was, yeah.

*Q: I mean these were planes who were flying along the borders and darting in and darting out.*

PICKERING: And sometimes getting shot down.

*Q: Did you get things from them?*

PICKERING: We had material from those. It wasn't very good. The U2 stuff was much better.

*Q: How about Morocco? How did it strike you? This was your first time outside of Australia but you were in a foreign country.*

PICKERING: I had come through Egypt on the way home by boat and stopped in Colombo and Aden and Port Said. I found Morocco extremely interesting. We used every opportunity we could to travel. Most of my unit was reservists like me- most of them with some graduate school education, most of them doing some of the same sort of things that I was doing and some of them with language capability too. We liked to travel. We did, we traveled almost everywhere you could go in Morocco. The one area that was out of bounds was the Algerian border where the French were still having a big problem.

*Q: Oh yes.*

PICKERING: There had been problems in Morocco before we got there as the French moved out but when we arrived there were more than 80,000 French troops in the country and they brought them out at night to our base which had a little port connected with it. So the French would come out after midnight in small units, load up on small ships and after a year or two they had drawn down most of the French military forces in Morocco without giving many people a big sense that that was happening.

*Q: Did you have any Moroccan contacts at all or did you get...?*

PICKERING: Almost none, a few. Most of the contacts were either with shopkeepers or folks like that. The Moroccan administration was just getting organized. The French still ran a large share of it. King Mohammad V who had been exiled by the French was back and very popular—the father of Hassan II and grandfather of the present Mohammad VI and it was fascinating that the public was admitted to see his ‘progress’ to the mosque on Friday’s from the palace in Rabat just down the road from then Port Lyautey, now Kenitra, where our base was located. It was always quite an interesting display. You could get folkloric feels for the country, go to places like Marrakech or over the Middle and High Atlas mountains into Berber territory and then into the desert. I got a pretty good feel for those parts of the country and used and improved my high school and college French

*Q: Was there any problem between the Algerians and the Moroccans or anything?*

PICKERING: I think very little at that point because Algerians were in still part of a French colony and the French ran it. I think the Moroccans were embarrassed a bit by what the French were doing there. They did not, I think, go out of their way to cooperate with the French even though the French had provided more than nominal independence? When we arrived for example, to go to Tangiers from where we were in (Kenitra-Port Lyautey) you had to go through several borders. We went through a French-Spanish border and then through an area of Spanish occupation and then another border into the international territory of Tangiers. There were still quite a few Spanish military. They had the Legion of Don Juan of Austria; which was this Spanish Foreign Legion; which was prominent there. In southern Morocco, the Spanish had another territory called Sidi Ifni; which was returned just as I left in ’59. Of course the Spanish occupied several small Mediterranean islands off the northern coast and still do and the two enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in the northern part of Morocco. But the Spanish area was still very much dominated by Spanish language and influence.

*Q: France was an integral part of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) at this point?*

PICKERING: Yes it was.

*Q: Was there a French element to what you all were doing?*

PICKERING: We lived on a French Naval Air Station and they were nominally in charge but we guarded the gate. They had such a small contingent that we dominated it. We used it for transport plane base, for the fleet intelligence center I was attached to and for a number of fleet support units so it was quite widely built up and a lot of American housing. The French operated old British WW II Sunderland seaplanes from the river next to the base and land based Lancaster bombers as naval reconnaissance aircraft, which they flew down toward Dakar. The French Navy was not a large player around at that time and stayed pretty much with a low profile. I had the enormous advantage of having as a landlady, a Moroccan Jewish lady who ran the town’s best nightclub. She had two young boys and she worked all night and slept days and only minded the noise if it got too loud during the day in her downstairs which I rented.

*Q: Were the B-47s based there?*

PICKERING: The US Air Force B-47 bases -- there were four, one at Sidi Slimane which was about thirty miles inland from the Naval Air Station, one at Ben Guerir outside of Marrakech in the south and one other base that probably never got finished. The Air Force used the Nouasseur base at Casablanca which has now become the Casablanca International Airport. I don't think it was operating B-47s when I was there but a least two other bases were.

*Q: Did you get any feel for were there too many Americans there? Were Americans a problem?*

PICKERING: I don't think that was a problem even for Port Lyautey where they added a lot to the economy. They didn't seem to have a lot of trouble getting along. Most of us who spoke French developed pretty good relations with the local French colon community who were reasonably friendly. There wasn't a lot of anti-American animosity. Moroccans were harder to meet and get to know, but there were more French in evidence than Americans a large number of whom lived and stayed on the base.

*Q: Well then you left there when?*

PICKERING: I was there from February of '57 to May of '59.

*Q: Then you got out?*

PICKERING: Yes, prior to leaving, I wrote the Department because I had taken my first exam for the Foreign Service, I think I had mentioned this to you, in June or July of 1953. I did the orals just before I went to Australia and they put me on the register and said they would keep me there. I wrote them in the spring of 1959 and said I was getting out of the Navy. I had one child and one on the way and I needed a job. They said, "Ok, come and see us the week after you get out and we will see what we can do." I stayed in touch and they said, "We have a class beginning of August '59." I said, "That's not good enough I need some income to support my family." They said, "Come and work as an FSR (Foreign Service Reserve) and we will find a place for you." So my first job in the State Department was an FSR working in BEX, the employment division it was called. Maybe it was part of BEX nominally, we never saw the BEX which dealt with FSOs. We were in the basement of a building at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. We were in charge of handling the mail for people who were interested in working in the Department as support staff. It was an interesting job for the short time I had it. I had a book of 80 to 100 stock answer letters with paragraphs. You read the mail and wrote down the numbers of the paragraphs and they were transcribed by typists and signed and sent out. I got good enough that they gave me some Congressionals and the hard ones to answer. I once wrote a letter to a protégée of Bob Murphy who was then Under Secretary who had worked for him as an interpreter and a translator during the Second World War in North Africa. I had to tell him why we didn't have a position for him. I did so carefully and at some length. It was written for Murphy's signature and as far as I know he signed the letter.

*Q: For the record, FSR is a Foreign Service Reserve Officer and did not require Senatorial approval. I think most of us came in as FSR and...*

PICKERING: I came in as an FSR-8.

*Q: So by...*

PICKERING: By August having exhausted my writing skills on these beautiful letters, I started at the Foreign Service Institute. I had an interesting class. Five of us had come out of the military and like me; either were working or just about to start working at the State Department to keep the wolf away from the door and the family intact. The others had been recruited in the spring of 1955 to work in the Passport Office to meet the spring rush. They knew all about passports and the issuance of passports, but for their deadly drudging duties they were given first choice of overseas assignments. Having just come back from two and a half years of overseas service, I was happy to stay in the States. When the assignments were given out I drew INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research).

*Q: What class was this? Do you remember?*

PICKERING: Class 26. It was in the old system I guess. Does that make sense? Maybe not, I think 26 was my OCS class.

*Q: I think it would be a lower number because I came in in July of '55 and I was Class 1.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: So probably...*

PICKERING: Two a year? I can't remember maybe 14 or 16; I will have to look it up.

*Q: At any rate it doesn't make any difference. How did you find when you first enter a Foreign Service class you kind of wonder who are these people and will I fit in and the Foreign Service has gotten played up as being the playground of the wealthy and the sophisticate and all of that.*

PICKERING: We had a good class. We had I think only one woman, which was probably usual in those days, and like my wife when she wanted to get married she had to leave the service, which is what happened to my wife when we got married. We had an excellent A-100 mentor/monitor/leader/friend, Mike Gannett. I don't know if you ever knew Mike.

*Q: No, I've heard the name.*

PICKERING: A terrific guy. Mike did a truly excellent job in getting us all thinking about and learning about the Foreign Service and a tremendous amount to give us a feel for what service life was really like, what counted and didn't count. As well, we did pretty seriously work at the course. We had a wonderful couple of days off-site up in the Blue Ridge at the old Army



Remount Station in Front Royal, which was fun and interesting and at the same time I thought we all came out of the course learning a fair amount.

*Q: Were you picking up some of what you wanted to do and what you don't? I'm thinking areas where it's a good idea to serve and...?*

PICKERING: I think a lot less than that. I think that we were pretty isolated. We were over at Arlington Towers, as you and I look out of the window here.

*Q: Yes, we can just barely see it. It used to be a skyscraper, a red brick buildings now.*

PICKERING: I think we were at Arlington House; I'm trying to remember now, yeah, about that time.

*Q: This is you came in '50?*

PICKERING: '59.

*Q: '59, yeah.*

PICKERING: As I remember, we didn't learn a lot of the kind of inside stuff on what to do and what not to do. Mike was pretty open and pretty much of the school that you can make your own way. You had to decide a lot of these things for yourself. You shouldn't be too driven by inside folklore.

*Q: Which is a danger.*

PICKERING: Was a danger of G-2ing the system, outwitting it or trying to out maneuver it or whatever. I think he was pretty up and up about it and talked to us frequently about the fact that if you did well and worked well you could get ahead and those were determinants. It gave us a pretty strong faith in the promotion system, a pretty strong feel for the sense of public service. I think we all had a clear idea of where we were. I took a pay cut when I came out of the Navy to go into the Foreign Service. I think that the initial salary was princely the sum of \$5200 a year.

*Q: Did you have a feel that you were; there was a sense of mission of spreading the spirit of America? I mean, was there...*

PICKERING: I had a little bit of that. I think I had a stronger sense of public service coming out of the Navy. I had a strong feeling that people should do public service, a strong feeling that military service in those days was obligatory and was a sensible thing to do. I know the military did a lot of dumb things, but I learned a huge amount. I think that the time I spent in the Navy I don't regret any of it. I learned interesting things like the captain of the ship gets down and inspects it every day. While you couldn't do that while running an embassy, I did it every quarter or so as Ambassador. A lot of the traditions and ideas that I picked up from naval service helped me to understand leadership. It also helped me remarkably to understand military officers and get along with them reasonably well as an FSO.

*Q: As a matter of fact, the State Department system in embassies is based on the Navy.*

PICKERING: Certainly our promotion system and some of our assignment system came out of the Navy.

*Q: Also the executive office with the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission). That whole thing when it was put together in '46 it was sort of, I mean, these are guys coming out of the Navy.*

PICKERING: A lot of them, yes. I mean in the Army you had some of the same, a leader and his deputy, people running sections and a lot of that came out of I think traditional diplomatic organizations as well so that it fit the pieces together.

*Q: You were taking training; let's see this would be in what '50, I mean '60...*

PICKERING: '59.

*Q: '59. I'm trying to think what was happening then? This was towards the end of the Eisenhower administration.*

PICKERING: It was. I'm trying to think myself.

*Q: By that time Herter had taken over. Dulles was dead I think. Did you have much contact with the upper reaches of...they come in and give you pep talks and that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: No, I think we were pretty much left alone. I think the upper reaches were kind of deputy office directors for us. We got a feel for the middle reaches of the State Department at that level. One of the interesting things I did was very early on after FSI (Foreign Service Institute) and language training in INR, we moved into the new building and had an opportunity to walk through the new building under construction. I think I was in the secretary's office before it was equipped and probably in my office almost 35 years later as Under Secretary before they ever got the paneling on the walls; which was kind of interesting to see.

*Q: When they added on to the old War Building.*

PICKERING: That's right.

*Q: When you went into INR did you have any feel as you were getting yourself into this, you and your wife, thinking "gee wouldn't it be fun to go here or go there" or were you sort of relaxed?*

PICKERING: I was sort of relaxed because I knew I would be there for a while. I had in the Navy access to compartmented intelligence programs and so thought it would be interesting to work in that. They had no need for photo interpreters. They had almost no access to photography and the communications intelligence programs were mainly handled by the long term civil service people in their own back room so I had very little to do with that. After taking French, I

went to work for Allan Evans who was a British origin civil service long-term deputy to the INR director.

*Q: What were you doing?*

PICKERING: Another officer and I had an interesting job. We produced something called The Intelligence Analyst, which was an INR monthly publication, pieces of that were written by INR analysts. We reviewed a lot of State Department aigrams and dispatches and picked out one a month and generally used it as the basis for praise for the author. We would write a précis or submit the whole dispatch as evidence of good reporting and good intelligence collection. We also had the duty of providing the intelligence input for the Staff Secretariat (S/S)Weekly, which was then called Current Foreign Relations. There was a piece at the back of the book so to speak that was contributed to by analysts, one of which was Hal Seinfeld and another, Larry Eagleburger. I used to go around the analyst in the new building beating them up for good material they were writing that I could use either to rewrite or to slip into the Current Foreign Relations. They were generally pretty cooperative and had some interesting things to offer.

*Q: Larry (Eagleburger) was working on Cuba, wasn't he and that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Latin America, certainly Cuba and Hal on Russia. I remember a lot of them; a lot of them had been around a long time. A lot of them were again civil servants who had been watching their parts of the world for a long time. They were interesting people and had interesting things they were writing about.

*Q: We had a large one if I recall being with Germany if you win then German was the language.*

PICKERING: Pretty much.

*Q: You sound like you were in Germany.*

PICKERING: I can remember some of the folks and the names and of course we were the most junior of the junior although my colleague in the office was already an FSO-7 or 6, a man by the name of Hal Horan who later ended up in African Affairs.

*Q: I've interviewed him too.*

PICKERING: We worked for a guy by the name of David Carpenter who was also a civil servant and he worked for Alan Evans. We had some contact with Alan, not a lot, but we were in the, I guess, it's the three corridor right in the middle of the building on the seventh floor. The head of INR had an office over on the E Street side of the corridor just opposite us -- Hugh Cummings.

*Q: How about writing? Did you learn Foreign Service writing or not or did you sort of pick this up by osmosis?*

PICKERING: I picked up, if I picked up anything, by osmosis by having the stuff I had written looked at, although it was mainly reviewed by civil service people. I learned I think a lot

painfully in terms of writing. We did very little in what was then the early days of memoranda up to the Seventh Floor, policy actions, this was almost all on the intelligence side and so it was reporting and the preparation of reporting in more concise form, rewriting things to fit them on the page of the publications so to speak. Working with S/S which was dominated by several older lady zealots meant we had to pick up quickly on their style and spelling conventions for submissions to Current Foreign Relations.

*Q: Did you get any feel for, since you weren't dealing with a particular area, were your colleagues getting a feeling about the role of INR and the desks, geographic bureaus?*

PICKERING: Yes, you got some of it but I think our work with the analysis kept us pretty clear on what the desks were doing and pretty clear of any disputes or difficulties. I had the impression that things in those days with INR were fairly collegial and that they had close working relationships. It was just immediately post-Wristonization, so you had some people who had moved into the foreign service and some were about to go overseas and a few civil servants who stayed on rather long term as is true in INR. You got a sense that a lot of these people had been working together for quite some time in the post-war period and were comfortable dealing with the issues they worked on.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the input of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) in what you all were doing?*

PICKERING: A fair amount because Alan Evans did a lot of the estimative work for the Department so he was thrown into that. We got a chance to look at a lot of the national estimates in preparation and see what the contributions were -- to read them, to get a feel for them but not a feel for the kind of dispute settlement mechanism in the estimated process. We had a clear sense that in a lot of these issues particularly some of the military estimates there were serious differences.

*Q: You were there from '59 until when?*

PICKERING: I was there for almost a full a year. I began interestingly enough in an old apartment building that stands right where the E Street expressway stands now, which was an early annex to the old WW II Department. They were just building the new Department. We for our sins, were on the eleventh floor in an elevator that had seen better days in a rabbit warren of offices occupying old apartments. Within a few months we moved into the new Department building. We were one of the first group in it -- that was a huge breath of fresh air in an entirely modern surrounding even though we were all still stuck with some of the older furniture that hadn't been replaced. It was a big change for us and it was a big change in working relationships because not only did we have contact with INR which was all originally jammed into this eleven story decrepit apartment building, but most of the rest of the Department. I think that began to open things up.

*Q: When you were selecting these things? Was there a sort of a pecking order of things you would look at, the Soviet Union first?*

PICKERING: Often we did but we also looked for the new, different, and unusual for insights, for perception, for analytical capability and so we would read stuff from strange places in Africa particularly if it looked like it was well written, interesting and offered some new insights. I remember reading one airgram from Zanzibar where I later ended up serving which had a delightful description of the British colonial service and it's misrule in Zanzibar, how bad things actually were. I think we ran that one in our publication.

*Q: In a way it was good. But something to get people, grab them in and get them to read it.*

PICKERING: Well, we had to because people weren't going to normally read it otherwise unless they had written it.

*Q: Who was your audience?*

PICKERING: Our audience was as far as we could tell the posts overseas got it. Whether they had read it or not we don't know. And for the rest of the Department there was a distribution to the offices and desks as well as throughout INR.

*Q: After a year wither?*

PICKERING: Well what happened was while I was in Washington beginning in June 1959, very good friends of ours found us a house to sit. He was British and was a friend of my wife's from Holland and she had introduced him to a friend of hers whom he married who was originally born in Germany and then lived in Brazil and was with us at Fletcher. He wrote for Reuters and then the Telegraph in London. They found us the house of a BBC correspondent. We babysat that, that was up on I think Newark Place in Cleveland Park but we knew we couldn't stay there forever so we went out and beat the bushes for a house. In the meantime, my wife was pregnant with our second child. It was on the way and so by mid-summer we found a house in a subdivision we liked at a price we could afford and moved out there. That was off the Mt Vernon Parkway below Alexandria in Virginia -- Hollin Hills subdivision.

When I got out there we had the one car. I had managed to buy a Volkswagen beetle in Gibraltar on the way home from the Navy in Morocco. I sold my larger Chevrolet in Morocco and brought the Volkswagen home. My wife said I'm not going to be marooned out here so you better find a carpool. I found a carpool through friends in the neighborhood with a much more senior state department guy who was living in the subdivision, Ron Spiers, and we carpooled every day. We had a third carpooler from the Federal Reserve who also lived in the area. It worked out very well and I think by the end of my first year the Department had formed something called the USDA (United States Disarmament Administration) at the end of the Dulles/Herter period. Ron was working there on disarmament said did I know a junior FSO who wanted to work in disarmament. I said, "What about me?" So he took me on board. I shifted over to this new U.S. Disarmament Administration before the inauguration of Kennedy when it became ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) after that and started to work for Ron Spiers and a guy by the name of Jim Goodby, whom you may know.

*Q: Oh yes, I know...*

PICKERING: Jim was my office director. I loved it. One of the first things I did was that the military wanted to have better equipment around the world for nuclear test detection and so through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) we gave away 130 standard seismographic instruments. One of my jobs was to take that project and communicate with all the seismographic observatories around the world and arrange for them to receive the instruments, put them in place and provide the data to a USGS central system, which was later, made available to the military when they wanted to look at it to check on underground tests.

Very shortly after that they asked me to take what was then the early few pages of negotiated text of a comprehensive test ban treaty and to in effect write all the missing articles, clear them through the State Department and the government and put together a comprehensive test ban proposal which we would then make at Geneva. That was terrifically interesting.

*Q: Where would you get, I mean, here you are this is nobody's field actually at that point, but where would you figure out what you needed?*

PICKERING: I would look at the text and try to figure out sort of logically what pieces had to be covered, what loopholes had to be filled. Then I would draft the articles, rework them, talk about them in the office, Jim was a great help and I would have to go down and often had to sit in Joe Sisco's outer office to clear with him. Joe was the Office Director of United Nations Political Affairs in the IO Bureau( UNP). I often had to do battle with Joe. He would see me usually about 5:45 when he was at his feistiest and then I would have to go and defend my draft treaty article with Joe as to why this was the right thing to do, this was the right way to approach it. This was terrific because I got great experience. Joe was never forgiving and never one to let you get away with anything at all. I had to meet pretty high standards. But, we put this together and it was put on the table.

At the same time Jim and others had an idea that we could probably get the Russians to agree to give up everything but underground testing. This would handle the biggest task of what we were doing to do -- cut out fallout and limit testing. Kennedy and the White House got the proposal to the Russians that we would do a comprehensive treaty or we would do a treaty in three environments -- space, the atmosphere and underwater, but not underground. The Russians jumped for the more limited test ban. Averell Harriman took that to Moscow and negotiated it in a few weeks. I spent a fair amount of my time doing these early things and then went out TDY to the Test Ban negotiation in Geneva. This was between '60 and '62. I spent time on the delegation there often writing speeches. It was interesting because Yuli Vorontsov who ended up both being my Russian colleague in New York and ambassador here when I was in Russia and then Under Secretary, was the deputy of Tsarapkin, the Soviet test ban negotiator. He was far above me in rank so I did not really get a chance to talk to him. It was fascinating to have time to sit opposite the Soviets on a negotiation like that. There were three of us, UK, U.S. and the Soviet Union, negotiating in the League of Nations Palais in Geneva. I happened to hit it at a particularly sterile time when we couldn't get much movement.

*Q: You know there is the nuclear mafia here in the United States, I mean it's a whole apparatus that wants to test and continue to test and they are more active today but this is a very powerful group of people. How did what you were proposing, I mean were you...?*

PICKERING: They were extremely strong. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy had a lot of interest in it. I did most of this during the Kennedy period. Bundy and others were very much engaged. I went to meetings to brief Bundy when he first came in about where we were. I think they understood the value of this. The US side was relieved that the Soviets did not opt for a comprehensive treaty, because the domestic opposition to ending all testing was very large and entrenched.

*Q: When Kennedy came in what was sort of the feeling toward this new group of people? The Kennedy contingent when it came in in January of '61 for many people it seemed like a breath of fresh air.*

PICKERING: There was a huge amount of excitement and those of us who were working on what was then seen as a truly new but important, previously fringe field of disarmament and arms control, Kennedy gave it an enormous boost because these new guys were seriously interested and you had people who began to kind of pick up on these kinds of things. They created the arms control and disarmament agency, began to staff it, brought in people, those of us who were working the negotiations for the State Department were sort of moved over and became in a sense the International Relations Bureau of ACDA, the negotiating bureau of the new arms control disarmament agency.

*Q: You weren't played as so often happens in administrations of young kids who had been active in the campaign coming in and messing around?*

PICKERING: We had some inside and we had some people coming in from the outside. We had this combination of some State Department people who had actually been involved in negotiations and as a result whose views on the negotiating process with the Russians were respected. We had some people from the scientific community. We had been working closely with them. There had been a scientific exchange with the Russians and the Brits before we began talking about test ban and talking about the viability of various control techniques. Frank Press an eminent seismologist, for example, who later became the president's science advisor for Carter was very much a part of that. You had military who came in who weren't sure what to make of all of this and how to deal with it.

We went ahead from the limited nuclear test ban, which was a centerpiece of what we were trying to deal with. We had tried to work on a cut-off of fissionable materials production. We had a few things we were working on just beginning to think about -- a non-proliferation agreement. The Russians put proposals on the table for general and complete disarmament. We began by '62 a general disarmament discussion in Geneva with 18 countries. The French never attended to avoid prejudicing their right to continue nuclear tests, so it was always 17, but I went out first on temporary duty and flew out on Dean Rusk's airplane. We had a chance to talk. I remember his fascination about what are we going to do about chemical and biological weapons. We had just begun early to think about it. It was terrifically interesting. I had on the test ban

delegation begun to work for a guy by the name of Charlie Stelle who had been carrying the load in the test ban and was resident in Geneva. He was one of the China hands, an army air force officer in China during the war.

We sat down and worked primarily with the Soviets and with others to set up the basic parameters of how this 17-nation discussion would work, what would be the rules of the game, in effect in organizing an international conference. It was really quite fascinating. I was the junior member of the delegation so I had the liaison with a couple of the Africans- Ethiopia and Nigeria. I got out to see their foreign ministers and talk to the delegations. They were at sea as much as anybody else. I dealt also with India a lot at that particular time. India had some really very able people. They had a strong delegation.

*Q: I'm not sure of my timing, I think it was in the late '50s but there was this non-aligned meeting and I think it was Khrushchev set off a horrendous air blast or ground blast.*

PICKERING: Oh, he was going to blow up his 50-megaton bomb. I was deputized to go to the UN General Assembly session at that time with Arthur Dean who was our principal negotiator. Arthur went from test ban to the general negotiations and I wrote speeches during that period of time. I got to be a speechwriter of turgid, endless, lengthy speeches on the nuclear test ban and then later on other disarmament subjects. Arthur was an old law colleague of John Foster Dulles and stayed on. Arthur unfortunately had failed in the first attempt at a Law of the Sea Treaty by a couple of votes from Latin's who felt unfairly treated and who left the same bad taste in Ambassador Dean's mouth. He then worked away at the nuclear test ban but was never able to move that ahead.

When we started this new 17-nation conference, he agreed in a fit of hunger for success to make the first subject we would discuss with the Russians at their suggestion the ending of war propaganda. We all took gas and Averell Harriman had apoplexy on the spot when he heard about it. Arthur burrowed and beavered through with determination on this text on war propaganda. It indeed turned out to be the first agreement we made. Everybody in Washington was holding their nose, but Arthur so interested in bringing about a success that he managed to fight this through. It was a fascinating thing because on a Friday we had a meeting of the committee of the whole, which was the whole conference but sitting in a forum which was preliminary. We reviewed the text and agreed it on Friday to have it be received by the full Plenary on a Monday morning. On Monday morning we walked in and the Russians denounced it and in fact wanted to expunge all evidence from it from the record. Charlie Stelle who had been around the Russians a long time jumped in and told Arthur Dean to say that if they did that we would read back into the record as our statement which they could not erase everything that was in the record they wanted to expunge. So that failed happily.

One of the next things we did was negotiate the hot line. We did that in a subcommittee under the aegis of this group, but entirely negotiated between our military communicators and their military communicators. We traded code machines in effect and so the hot line was one of the first results of that.

*Q: Basically a teletype?*



PICKERING: Yes, it was basically a teletype with their encryption and our encryption, which worked back and forth. We had one for Cyrillic and one for English.

*Q: What about when these 17-members, I mean, we have Ethiopia and Nigeria in all, what contribution were they making? Was this...*

PICKERING: Mainly sitting by and learning. In a way for them it was a marvelous educational experience and they quickly picked up on it. The non-aligned group there I think caucused quietly among themselves. I'm trying to remember who else we had. China was not there because we couldn't abide China in those days. It was the Soviets and the British so these were the permanent members. The Russians wouldn't allow Taipei in and we wouldn't allow Beijing, so we left them both out. The Czechs were there as were the Poles on the Soviet side. Egypt was there. It was an interesting group, we had Brazil and Argentina, Canada. I don't think the Japanese were there at that point or not, they may not have been.

*Q: What was your feeling about the Soviets, I mean, were they serious in this thing or?*

PICKERING: We saw the Soviets in those days first when I went over on the test ban -- it was hard not to see them as "the enemy". You got to work with them a little bit and understand them and see some individuals and it became a little more congenial. We had several ambivalent lunches and dinners together, people sort of relaxed a little bit. But it was clear Tserapkin was a consummate hardliner and very difficult to deal with. We were sure he was following his instructions to the letter. In that regard so was Valerian Zorin. Zorin was an artful speaker and tremendously sort of capable digger at us in the West. He never left a stone of rhetorical attack unturned.

We had a very clever British delegation leader who was a member of Parliament and became later Minister of Agriculture, Joseph Godber. I don't know if you ever heard his name, but he was, like many of our British colleagues a master of debate. In one of Joe's speeches at the end almost ad-lib he said he had noted that Mr. Zorin was frequently talking about capitalist circles, capitalist circles here, capitalist circles there. "How would he like it," he said, "if I called you a red square?" Most of the room howled, the Russians looked nonplussed, the interpreters failed and we had a tremendously capable Russian linguist on our delegation by the name of Alex Akalovsky who actually did the interpretation for President Kennedy in his first meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna. They came running over to Alex, five of them, and he had to explain what the Red Square pun was. Those were the few light moments in an otherwise fairly dreary thing. We met in the Old League Council Chamber, which was decorated with sepia tone giants by an obviously impoverished Spanish artist seeking glory somewhere. It was a terribly depressing room having spent many hours looking at the ceiling.

*Q: You left there when?*

PICKERING: I was in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency until July '62. I did frequent TDYs (temporary duties) between '60 and '62. Then they asked if I would be the first assigned person in Geneva for this conference (18-nation Disarmament Conference) and I agreed. I went

over and joined a couple of people who had been there for the test ban who then filtered away. David Marks, I don't know whether you know him, and David Popper were both over there, and I worked with them. Jake Beam came to be the replacement for Charlie Stelle for a while and then we had some others, but I was really there holding the fort. I went to Geneva in July '62 and stayed until July of '64.

*Q: You were there during the critical period of the Cuban missile crisis and all that and it was very obviously based on a nuclear element. Did this, I mean, how did this affect you?*

PICKERING: It was fascinating because, of course, we watched it from there along with the Kennedy assassination.

*Q: The one was in '62 and November '63 was the Kennedy assassination.*

PICKERING: At the end of the Cuban missile crisis I believe we got a new lease on life. I can't remember when the partial test ban was done but I think it came after '62. Kennedy gave a marvelous speech on general disarmament I think at the beginning of '63 and things began to open up a little bit on the arms control issue. We got the Russians to understand that general and complete disarmament was not the wave of the future even though it was a good catchy slogan. We began to look at some steps that could be negotiated that might make some differences like the hot line and similar agreements. It was small but a not insignificant breakthrough in the building of the structure of arms control and disarmament deals between us and the Soviets and disarmament.

*Q: During the Cuban missile crisis were people kind of whispering in corridors or was there a feeling that we would get through this or was there...?*

PICKERING: There was a lot of uncertainty. I think the Russians dried up for a while as a talking partner and a source. We had an interesting access to a number of Russians, some of them pretty well placed and so we were hearing a lot which we fed into Washington about what was going on in Moscow. Occasionally, we would get some interesting tidbits and occasionally some of them would come and talk to people like Alex Akalovsky who both our interpreter both also a talented substantive officer on the disarmament issues. They had gotten to know him they were perhaps more comfortably in speaking Russian with him. There was a lot of unease and uncertainty but it went by quickly, happily. It was agonizing for a while wondering where it was going to go -- a nuclear conflict or a way to settle the problem. We were all tremendously relieved when Kennedy's speech on quarantine and withdrawal was made, but we were not in the center of it by any means.

*Q: Yeah. Did you get the feeling that being in Geneva that this was spy vs. spy playground or that?*

PICKERING: There was a fair amount of it, but we were not directly involved in it. We had people in the agency but they were mainly analysts -- armament and Soviet experts on the delegation as well as military people. We saw them frequently -- we had as much contact maybe

and as a more helpful atmosphere developed even perhaps than folks did in Moscow or Washington in some ways.

One of the most interesting to me is that Ray Garthoff and I had dinner with Yuri Nosenko the night before he defected. Ray was an expert in the Soviet military with wide contacts. He was an arms control negotiator and became a Deputy Director in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at State and helped to negotiate the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (START).

Nosenko was calm and not nervous. He did not say much and seemed to be familiar, but not overly engaged in the Soviet position. As far as I knew neither Ray nor I had any indication of his contacts with US folks or his intention to leave the Soviet Delegation. His father I believe had been a Deputy Minister of Transport in the Soviet Government. The information is that he was badly treated by James Jesus Angleton, then head of counter intelligence out at Langley in part or in whole because Angleton believed he was a plant in an attempt to penetrate our own agency. Apparently, in the end that was not the fully accepted view

*Q: Did you get any feel for this game that started to be playing by Teller and others, "OK if we have an exchange here, we'll only lose twenty and they'll lose forty million." This is something...*

PICKERING: We were very much interested in that kind of thinking and that kind of activity. It played a major role in what positions eventually the U.S. government was going to take on the disarmament questions. Many of those issues were battled and fought out in Washington. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency was created to try to counter weight Pentagon influence in the decision-making. When Kennedy came in I think he felt he should be prepared to give it more time than his predecessors. Rusk was interested but not consumed by it and the first folks in ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) were determined to have it taken seriously. State was a natural ally and in fact many people saw ACDA as almost a part of State, vice versa, even if they weren't. In those early days, with most if the negotiating team had come from State the State influence in the organization and its approach was large.

*Q: You didn't feel then that you were off, you felt you were part of a dynamic part of American foreign policy.*

PICKERING: Yes, and that became clear. Kennedy and Mac Bundy, Dean Rusk and others did a lot to bring this into the main stream fairly quickly. You felt you were on the cutting edge of an effort to make some sense out of the Cold War confrontation -to take the opportunity to deal with the question of deterrence and building more stability and confidence, with the arms race, with the expenses that were involved, with the chances of accident and miscalculation. The Cuba missile crises certainly sped that approach along quite a bit.

*Q: What about the death of Kennedy in November of '63 and with President Johnson the greater involvement in Vietnam? Did that sort of shift the focus, did you feel that some of the life went out of the...*

PICKERING: I think so. We had a feeling about that, but I can't tell you that we detected a big change before '64. It was always tough going, nothing ever came easily and even with the

change after the Cuban missile crisis it was more the importance of the things that were happening in the slow evolution of both sides views on the issues, than a rapid move to a whole lot of agreements.

*Q: Was there an imbedded Pentagon representative in your thing who was reporting back and sort of telling the Romney's and other people...*

PICKERING: Yes, well this was before Ed Romney. There were JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) representatives and obviously they were working very closely with the Pentagon. It was in that time when I think the Pentagon -- uniformed officers -- were more skeptical, You had fewer of what I would call the kind of modern Pentagon arms controllers engaged, so it was a harder slog but we also had military officers who saw the value of this and what the Commander in Chief wanted done. There was a certain amount of deference to national security policy objectives built up with the growing interest in and role of disarmament and arms control. I forget who was the SecDef (Secretary of Defense) in those days, was it Harold Brown? No, McNamara.

*Q: McNamara.*

PICKERING: McNamara didn't take a lot of interest in it as he later did. I later dealt with him from time to time after he retired on these issues. He began to think more about the potential benefits -- and some of his guys did as well. We had a very interesting person who was ISA (International Security Affairs), John McNaughton, who took a very positive interest in this. I am sure the uniformed people found it more difficult. I think that the Democrats and the folks that they had brought in under Kennedy were more prepared to take a positive view of the potential for disarmament.

*Q: Were there any people, you gave to the military who take a look at this and say, "Listen these weapons are fine but they are not usable".*

PICKERING: Some of them did. Many of them went into it in an even more sophisticated and deeper way. Considering how would we end up if we had to use nuclear weapons, was a trade with the Soviet Union sensible? Bud Zumwalt, who later became CNO (Chief of Naval Operations), was one of the young officers involved along with the civilian John McNaughton. I got to know him. He was one of a number of military exchange officers in the State Department carefully picked because they were already identified as fast movers. They sent some very good officers to the State Department, a number of whom got three and four stars before they completed their careers. Along with Bud Zumwalt from the Navy, Jack Chain from the Air Force also came over for a time and ended up leading the Strategic Air Command.

In my early days at what was called the US Disarmament Administration (USDA not to be confuse with the Agriculture Department !) under the Republicans -- Dulles and then Herter I had several interesting jobs for a very junior officer. One was overseeing a program to distribute around the world 180 standard seismographs to internationally reputed seismographic stations. I dealt with foreign government and the operators of the stations. They were to provide a strong basis for analyzing seismographic signals and of most interest to our military -- The Air Force

oversaw this -- were those that might come from underground nuclear tests. I worked independently and with the Geological Survey among others.

The second was a bit more demanding. We were engaged with the Soviets and the British in negotiating a Test Ban Treaty. We had completed a few articles. I was asked to write those needed to comprise a comprehensive test ban treaty as we saw it for presentation to the Soviets by the Kennedy Administration. I had this as my own project, but had to clear the articles in a number of senior officers, perhaps the most demanding was Joseph Sisco who then led UNP, United Nations Political Affairs. I developed a pattern of going to Joe's office every night about 1800 and sitting there until he could see me and then going over the latest submission for a new article of the treaty. It took a while to get to know Joe, but it was worth it. He had a good feel for the subject and I brought him along a bit on the technology which I had to master before seeing him. He respected you if you pushed back when you thought he was wrong but tested it sharply. I learned much from Joe and we became if not colleagues and friends at least associates and he was always available to me throughout my career.

*Q: Did they have a political/military branch at that time or were they...*

PICKERING: No, I'll tell you because I later came back and participated. What we had was a Special Assistant for Atomic Energy. Phil Farley headed it up and Ron Spiers, Vince Baker and David Mark in Geneva all were experienced in the issues and had had some contacts with the Soviets in the field. Then Ron went over to the disarmament agency. Phil stayed but that kind of atrophied at State for a while and later on it was amalgamated with some other offices to set up the political/military Bureau. As I recall, that happened after I left Geneva, while I was in Africa and before I came back. I came back to my next assignment in the political/military bureau.

*Q: When you left in June of '64...?*

PICKERING: June/July of '64.

*Q: June/July. What was your feeling whether arms control, we are talking about arms control at this point, it was almost completely nuclear wasn't it?*

PICKERING: No, we had begun to think about conventional limitations as well as chemical and biological weapons. We had begun to think about balancing conventional forces in Europe, about some of the things that later took place under CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe). It was interesting; we gave some serious thought to a lot of those issues. We talked a lot about them in the delegation meetings. We never made any real progress with them then, they got into the very hard, too hard category, but we helped to open up in the discussions in those meetings. A lot of those subjects were a central part of future discussion.

About this time, the Soviets wanted to talk wider disarmament. They liked the term general and complete disarmament. As you can imagine, we were not so sure or enamored of the approach given the significant distrust of the Soviets at this stage of the Cold War. Nevertheless, we decided to take advantage of their interest to see what we could accomplish through negotiation by steps and stages. The 18-Nation Disarmament Conference was organized in Geneva. I worked

with Charlie Stelle our Deputy Nuclear Test Ban negotiator to help set it up, We met with his opposite number and in a few hours quickly worked out the details of how it was to operate. Dean Rusk and I think Gromyko came for the opening.

*Q: What was the role of the French in all this?*

PICKERING: They were not there.

*Q: Why?*

PICKERING: They absented themselves. I think it was De Gaulle's view that he wouldn't participate because he was creating his nuclear dissuasion force, He didn't want to get involved in talking about limitations on testing or on armaments until France got comfortable that its own position was sufficiently well developed that he could count on it to make him a player at the main table. He wanted to avoid a situation where his force might be sacrificed to Russian interests before it could be fully established.

*Q: It's interesting because in a way it made things a lot easier didn't it?*

PICKERING: It might have. One wonders what role or position the French would have taken. It however was unlikely to happen. Had they been shoehorned in, they would not at that stage been very helpful. They were pleased to be out and we were even happier to have them out as a result of their capacity for making mischief until they had become fully established as a nuclear weapon state.

*Q: We come to the summer of '64 whither?*

PICKERING: Well it was very interesting. In the spring of '64, something that I had signed up for when I was in INR -- before I moved over to ACDA -- was to go to Africa. You may remember they were looking for volunteers for Africa.

*Q: This is during the discovery of Africa by the Department of State maybe it was in*

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PICKERING: Maybe it was later but around '60, '59-'60 maybe, '60 I think was my first year in INR. I signed up to go to Africa. I said I would be happy to volunteer for Africa. New states were appearing regularly from the break-up of the colonial territories in Africa under the UK and later France. So by spring of '64 the great personnel system in the sky had discovered this and produced an assignment to Swahili language training and Africa -- in this case Elizabethville (Lubumbashi) in the Congo. Most of my heavily Europeanist arms control colleagues, including folks like Jake Bean said, "What a tragedy, why would you do this and we can certainly pull strings in the Department and get you assigned elsewhere and maybe you would go to Paris." I had visions of running elevators in a place like Paris! I said, "No, I was very happy with going to Africa." It seemed to me to be an interesting opportunity. My wife was happy to go to Africa and so we hung in. I came back and started language training in the autumn of '64 -- started Swahili language training.

*Q: How did you find Swahili as a language?*

PICKERING: I liked it very much.

*Q: Is it Arabic based or what is it?*

PICKERING: It's an interesting language. It's grammatically a Bantu language and is concordial in a sense that the prepositions, the adjectives, even the subjects of sentences all have to agree with principal nouns. I say the subject because besides the noun there is a marker that precedes the verb that stands with and agrees with the noun. There are eight classes of nouns with singular and plural forms and so as you use different nouns in a sentence, the other words all have to agree in class and number. In that sense it's a very different language than Indo-European and Semitic root languages we are more used to. About 30 percent, maybe in some places more, of the vocabulary is of Persian-Arabic origin from their influence on the East African coast.

As a language it grew up as a trade language, a lingua franca from the coast inland. Suahel in Arabic means "the coast". It was interesting that it grew up in the same period as English and it the Persian-Arabic stood in the language in some ways the way French Latin did in a mixture with Anglo-Saxon in English. It was an interesting experience. I didn't noticed one aspect, but I made friends when I was in East Africa with an old British Arabist from the Sudan service who was collecting Swahili manuscripts written in Arabic letters; written probably before the turn of the century. He told me that he had just read the Julius Nyerere's translation of Julius Caesar and where Shakespeare used French Latin words for the noble speech in the play, he had automatically gone to the Arabic-Persian words.(Nyerere was the first President of Tanzania and at the time of independence the only university graduate.) Where common everyday street speech was in Anglo-Saxon origin words in English he went to Bantu words. He said he asked Nyerere about this. Nyerere said, "I felt I did what was natural." But it was interesting that he had this feel for the two languages and that they this relationship -- not that Swahili had the broad English vocabulary, but it's a pretty broad language, which has adopted the Persian-Arabic tradition of poetry. So in the Swahili daily newspapers in East Africa you still had a poetry corner. The Arabic alphabet was a bad choice to use to write the language. Arabic is short on writing vowels. Everyone had their own spelling system! Swahili is based on a heavy use of vowels; all of which are pronounced the way they are in Italian. It has most of our consonants and a few extra. An English bishop in the 1870s applied the Latin letters to it and it is perfectly regular in spelling -- Italian pronunciation for the vowels, English for most of the consonants..

*Q: With this where were you going to go?*

PICKERING: That was really interesting. My first assignment was to Elizabethville, Lubumbashi now.

*Q: Which would have been French?*

PICKERING: But Swahili too, eastern Congo is Swahili speaking. It's very interesting and in fact eastern Congo still uses Swahili as a lingua franca but instead of English loan words there

are a lot of French. They use words, like 'secretare general' instead of secretary general; they use French when they have to introduce an outside word for something.

My assignment changed while I was studying Swahili. It changed because suddenly Frank Carlucci who was in Zanzibar and the DCM in Dar es Salaam had been speaking on the phone together about getting some 'ammunition' to get Soapy William, the assistant secretary of state for African Affairs to send an anniversary message to the Zanzibaris. I think it was perhaps the anniversary of the April 1964 union with Tanganyika which made Tanzania. The clever Chinese or East Germans whoever did the telephone monitoring for the Zanzibaris convinced the Zanzibaris that these guys were plotting to overthrow the Zanzibar revolutionary regime. They were going to bring in ammunition to start a counter revolution. (Only one of the members of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council spoke English with any measure of fluency) So Frank and the DCM in Dar were sent packing and Don Petterson in Zanzibar with was left holding the fort. So the Bureau picked somebody up out of the Swahili course to go to Zanzibar. They called me and said your assignment has changed. I said where and they said Zanzibar, I said delighted and I went off to Zanzibar.

*Q: If you had gone to Elizabethville would you have been caught in the, with Mike Hoyt, in the...*

PICKERING: No, he was in Stanleyville (Kisangani).

*Q: Oh, he was in Stanleyville. Ok.*

PICKERING: I'm trying to remember whether... maybe Stanleyville (Kisangani) or Lubumbashi, I'm trying to remember the names. Anyway, Mike came a little after, but Frank had been in Congo. Frank had actually been wounded in Congo.

*Q: Stabbed.*

PICKERING: Stabbed and then ended up in Zanzibar with all this stuff going on. When I arrived in Zanzibar there were just Don Petterson and I think maybe one or two other people, it's a tiny post.

*Q: You ended up in Zanzibar from when to when?*

PICKERING: I finished language training in April of '65 and I went right out. My wife stayed and kept the kids in school. She didn't come out until the summer. I went out at that period and spent a week in Dar es Salaam and then went over to Zanzibar.

*Q: You were up there until when?*

PICKERING: I stayed there two full years. John Burns was the ambassador in Dar asked me to come over and be DCM after Zanzibar.

*Q: Zanzibar at that time was one of our oldest posts; it goes back to what 1820 or something like that.*



PICKERING: 1836.

*Q: 1836 or '37, but this is when we had...*

PICKERING: But it was closed in 1910 for financial reasons and then it was reopened for the space program in the end of the '50s. We had a tracking station on Zanzibar for the Mercury program.

*Q: What was the situation when you got there in '65, in Zanzibar?*

PICKERING: What had happened was that an island which had been probably the last refuge of the major incompetents of the British colonial service had gone through a revolution in January of 1964. It following their independence I think in late November, early December of 1963 under an Arab Sultan. The revolution brought down the Arab Sultan, Jamshid, of the Omani Royal family. The Omani's had taken over the rule of the island about 1820 and in fact at one point the Omani ruling family actually moved to Zanzibar. Then it split in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the two parts remained separate and in the colonial expansion period the British established a protectorate in Zanzibar.

*Q: Let me just stop.*

*Q: This is Tape 3, Side 1 with Tom Pickering. Tom, ok, we've sort of got you going into Zanzibar but we really we've got to 1810 or so...*

PICKERING: On the history of Zanzibar.

*Q: We'll talk about the rather nasty little business in '64 when the Arabs were kicked out and all that. So we really haven't talked about anything until we get there and we'll pick that up at that point. Right.*

*Q: Ok, today is the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2003. Tom, as you went out to Zanzibar what were you told to expect and what was the situation there?*

PICKERING: I had done a fair amount of reading and some consultation in the Department. It was clear that after Frank Carlucci left and also after that when Don Petterson was in charge they had gone through a fairly rough patch. Also, following the revolution and the expulsion of Fritz Packard who was there prior to Frank with Don, it was clear that you had a group of folks who were running the country who were fairly paranoid about western imperialism. They associated the United States directly with the UK in that regard. At the same time, a lot of Cold War foes of ours moved into Zanzibar. The Russians quickly, the Chinese quickly, the Cubans, the Bulgarians among others East Germans. It was their first opening to establish any kind of consular or diplomatic presence outside the East Bloc. If memory serves me well, Zanzibar was an independent state between January '64 and April '64 after which it was incorporated in Tanzania. The East Germans first actually had an embassy in Zanzibar, which kind of broke the line against dealing with them. It was full of people who were not necessarily very keen to have

us around and saw us basically as a spearhead of potential counter revolution against the revolutionary council formed mainly out of members of the Afro-Shirazi Party that led the revolt against the Sultan, Jamshid.

*Q: Did we have a space...?*

PICKERING: We did, the Mercury Program Tracking Station, but it was closed by the time I got there.

*Q: Because that had also been a center of...*

PICKERING: It had also been a center of concern in the past. That was not part of my personal experience; it had been removed by the time I got there, It was shut in I guess the spring of '64 when, after the revolution in January was successful; they asked for its removal and we agreed to pull it out.

*Q: When you went there, first of all, what did we have a consulate, a consulate general, or whatever?*

PICKERING: I think at the time that I arrived it had been a consulate general but it had already become a consulate. It was a consulate general for protocol purposes only. We had in the space of less than a year gone from a consulate to a consulate general to an embassy to a consulate general by the time I got there and on our way to becoming a consulate again.

*Q: Were you in charge? Who was in charge?*

PICKERING: Don Petterson was in charge when I arrived and Don stayed in charge until he left, I think about nine or ten or twelve months later. Then I became in charge.

*Q: What was the situation on the ground when you got there? What were we trying to do and what were the problems?*

PICKERING: The situation had calmed a lot from the very difficult days. We were trying to understand what was happening in terms of where this revolutionary, pro-communist government, nearly independent in most aspects on the island, was going. We were doing everything we could to support the United Republic with Nyerere on the mainland exercising a significant amount but not complete influence by any means over Zanzibar. We were trying to establish relationships with the Zanzibar leadership such as they were -- Abeid Amani Karume in specific terms who was the Vice President of Tanzania and the President of Zanzibar and our major interlocutor. It was some of the people around him that were troublesome, in part because of their anti-colonial bias and in part in the Cold War context because of their close friendship with the communist states which rapidly set up there after the January 1964 revolution.

We had among other things begun building a technical college, a secondary school focused on technical issues and AID had provided the money. There were no AID people on the island, the revolutionary regime strictly limited our size and controlled the movement of people to and from

the island. So we oversaw it and worked with the local contractor, and “Asian” in local parlance, an Indian by origin, to get that done. That was one of the early things we did while I was there. We wanted to create a political presence to indicate that we were not abandoning Zanzibar. We were maintaining our presence out there to signal to folks that we were not being pushed out by Cold War changes or by efforts or pressures from around us from the Russians and the Chinese to see if they could get us removed.

*Q: Of course it was a time then where no one was even sure what was going to happen Cold War wise. Africa was sort of the field of conflict wasn't it?*

PICKERING: Well it was one of the areas, certainly one of the contested areas for relationships and friendship. It was, of course, the time of the Vietnam War in the late '60s, the time of Martin Luther King's death and then Robert Kennedy's. The Kennedys had been extremely popular in East Africa. It was the time of the beginning of our space program and the first moon landing took place just after I left Zanzibar went to Dar es Salaam. So those all form a backdrop for a number of things that were happening both directly Cold War-related and not so directly Cold War related. But when I first got there, there was apparently a lot of interest in the United States up to and including people told me Averell Harriman in the administration as to what was going on in Zanzibar and how things were operating.

*Q: Was the government the ruling party, were they in charge or were they pretty much in command and what were their...*

PICKERING: There were divisions in their so-called revolutionary council and they were not hard to pick up. The divisions between those who may have been very heavily co-opted by our communist opponents on one side or another, those who were traditional leaders of the traditional African party, as opposed to Arab -- the Afro-Shirazi Party. Some had been to study and work in China and Russia. The party structure of Zanzibar really grew out of a combination of the ethnic divide between Africans and Arabs. It first emerged in an organized sense in football clubs and then the football clubs under the late British protectorate morphed into parties. The most prominent among them, in opposition to the Arab leadership, which ran the island and the neighboring island of Pemba and was a traditional monarchy, was the Afro-Shirazi Party. The Shirazi part came from their stories of Persian ancestry (the city of Shiraz) and so they were people often of mixed race and ethnicity. They lived on the island for centuries and formed a predominate part of its population. There were also Arabs from mainly Oman who were in the minority but the rulers (under British “protection” from the 1890's) up until the revolution in December 1963.

There were others on the island who were more recent immigrants from the main land who were not considered Shirazi, but who also formed a part of the African majority. They represented a number of tribal groups from the mainland. Then, in particular in Zanzibar town (called Stone Town because the buildings were made of coral rock and cement) there was a significant population from the sub-continent, people from Goa, Gujarat and Kutch in western India and some from other parts of India. Most of the Africans lived in a ring of streets around Stone Town in traditional buildings of wattle and thatch. We had a small but very interesting Zoroastrian community; Parsi's from India from around Bombay. Some of the Indians were Hindu, but

probably a majority of Muslims. The Christian population was small, Anglicans many descended from non-Muslim freed slaves from the interior and Roman Catholics from Goa and from a Mozambique tribe called Wakonde. The later were artists in wood, particularly ebony, but also worked as night guards and filed their teeth to points. The Wakonde were in the same church with the Goans, Many of them were heavily “anglicized”, well educated and worked in the highest level occupations as doctors and lawyers.

*Q: Were they mainly merchants?*

PICKERING: The Asians were, they were the merchant group and shop keepers. Most of the Indians were merchants or technicians, if you could put it that way. Some had served the Arab government. but were now more or less independent merchants

*Q: You are talking about all these groups such as the Soviets, the East Germans, the Chinese and all there, this must have seen a very attractive target for them and I would suspect they were throwing quite a bit of money around and projects and all that?*

PICKERING: Well there was some. It was a small place so their capabilities were limited by that fact.

The East Germans started a housing project and built flats. They made a classic mistake of using beach sand without washing it so that in fact the salt in the beach sand made the housing project concrete work fairly fragile.

The Chinese were interested mainly in agriculture and medicine. They brought quite a few Chinese-style small tread propelled tractors to try to plow the rice fields. Apparently Zanzibar rice farming was quite different than any of them had seen so they didn’t make a notable dent. I remember driving out in the country side around Zanzibar to see lots of their tractors parked but not working. I think Zanzibar hoped that they would build a stadium, but they never did.

The Russians provided military equipment -- some four-wheel light armored cars and they provided along with the East Germans patrol boats. They were beautifully fit for Baltic service but not necessarily air-conditioned well enough to make the move to the tropics. Zanzibar was only 4 degrees south of the equator so the weather made some of their gifts not very useful. The Soviets took cloves in return, sometimes in barter trade.

One of the most interesting things was I was succeeded by Jack Matlock and the Russians were still taking most of the clove crop. About that time in ’65 Suharto was displaced in Indonesia by Sukarno. Indonesia was a heavy user of cloves in cigarettes. Suharto had blocked the purchase of foreign-produced closes. Sukarno opened the door again. Jack discovered that the market in Singapore where the clove crops were brokered and were all traded in foreign prices that were much higher than the Russians were giving. He got on to the Zanzibar’s and helped them convert their clove crop to cash rather than to barter trade. Zanzibar suddenly became one of the wealthiest small islands on the Indian Ocean, including the fact that they brought in television. (You will have to do Jack’s oral history to get all that.)

*Q: How did you find, it was a two-man post?*

PICKERING: No it was slightly larger. I had a visa officer, secretary, and an administrative officer who was her husband. I had a USIS officer and a couple of political officers.

*Q: What were you doing?*

PICKERING: Basically we were looking at what was going on, reporting on it because there was a huge amount of interest in what was happening. We had earlier established a USIS center and library that became the object of some interest on the part of the other folks and they tried to shut it down on a number of occasions before I got there. And then on one occasion when a contact with whom I had worked, who I had inherited from Frank Carlucci, told me early in the morning when I saw him that something was about to happen to the American Library. By 11:00 in the morning I was summoned to Karume's office very precipitately. He has unusually gathered most of the revolutionary council which was his body for running the place. He accused me of running a spy center at the Library and they were going to shut it down and throw us all out.

We got word back to the embassy in Dar es Salaam and they persuaded Nyerere to tell Karume how libraries work, including the fact that we made all of our patriots have cards so we knew where our books were. They apparently had been persuaded by their friends in the communist consulates that the cards were very important in collecting information from our patrons. At the end of the day, the Zanzibaris as you might suspect wanted to see our cards. USIS didn't want to let them have them; I went ahead and let them do it. I took out any cards that I thought might be at all dangerous to anybody in town and they were shocked we had something like six thousand cards of people who were patronizing our library. In about four months, and I was quite confident they would not really want to look at them all, I got them all back. There wasn't any problem so letting them see the cards which they could not really handle forestalled shutting their library down. I had a great African-American USIS officer working with me, Barney Coleman, who actually helped set up the library. He got it going and ran it.

*Q: It sounds like there was a government on Zanzibar that was quite unfriendly and yet at the same time we were doing all right with the government in...*

PICKERING: There is no question at all that the union was a more virtual union than a real one. In many ways, Zanzibar maintained a lot of the independence it had achieved with the revolution in January 1964. There was a constant struggle, for example, to get back into Zanzibar. Whenever you went off the island, you had to get a special "re-entry permit" so you would be allowed back on to the island. That was the kind of bureaucratic problem we had to go through. I had always assumed that they may have inherited the basic ideas for this from the British and then put them to their own uses.

There was a foreign ministry in Zanzibar that was essentially the protocol office where they handled these kinds of things. They occasionally they did things like organize receptions and dinners that were held by the government for the consular corps and to which local people were also invited. There were sometimes dinners in honor of a visitor, anniversary, or movie showings or occasionally the government would sponsor musical evenings. There was a tradition in

Zanzibar where music called “taarab” was performed. It is the Swahili name and obviously meant “Arab style music”. There was always in Swahili society a tremendous interest in poetry. Poetry and the music went together and there some of these cultural evenings to which you were invited. We were all also invited, the consular corps, to speeches which Karume would give on a very large former British athletic field. It used to be part of the old British golf course in Zanzibar near the edge of town. The consular corps was provided a canopy to sit under and you would listen to the speeches that he gave to the local people in Swahili. It helped me improve my Swahili markedly which I was actively studying at the time. I even on occasion ventured translations into French for my French consular colleague who spoke no Swahili.

*Q: Were you constricted in getting out and around or meeting people?*

PICKERING: No, interestingly enough no. I think we were closely watched and as Barney Coleman used to tell me, he said that, “You can tell the security guys, they have shoes.” We acted as if we were closely watched and probably were but we attempted to be open, aboveboard and careful in all of our actions. To contact people I just walked around town and talked to shop owners and others. People were nervous and clearly not willing to come to our house, not in ones and twos and not even in small groups. The one success I had was Fourth of July when I invited everybody I knew and could think of and people came, and they seemed to feel comfortable.

Karume came and the public seemed to know he was going to be there along with the secretary general of the party, a man by the name of Thabit Kombo, who was a traditional leader for the old Afro-Shirazi group on Zanzibar. Some of these people were among useful contacts that we had. My next-door neighbor was the only member of the Security Council of the Revolutionary Council who graduated from university -- Makerere in Uganda. The rest of them had had very little if any education. Swahili was imperative in communicating with most people.

*Q: What about Karume? Where was he from and how did we at that time view him?*

PICKERING: He came out of an organizing movement from the football club. I forget whether he had been a fisherman or not but he early on organized a football club and then helped it move into a political party. Their political party was suppressed or at least kept isolated under the British Protectorate by the Arabs who didn’t want African political parties playing much of a role. When the revolution, came as you may remember the gentlemen from Uganda came down, Johnny Okello, and suddenly appeared along with the revolutionary folks for a while. He tried to takeover and then was quietly shipped back to the mainland by the Afro-Shirazi political party into whose hands the revolution in a sense fell. They organized the revolutionary council to a form of government. Karume was the leader among the winners. As a result inherited the mantel of traditional leadership, I think with some help from Nyerere and his people, They apparently knew him and knew he was not among the most radical, but still a fairly strong local figure who could demand some loyalty from among the members of the party and its leadership.

*Q: Were there any concerns we had like the Soviets setting up a base there and...*

PICKERING: There was a lot of that and there were always rumors. We could visit most of the island. There were one or two places that were not available to us because they happened to be

places where Karume had a house or they had fenced off for military camp. But we never saw any real evidence that they had made serious efforts to do it. Happily, in terms of air fields there was only one air field and that was where all the commercial traffic went in and out so that couldn't be easily taken over without knowing it. The entire island was surrounded by reefs and islets and so there was very little deep water access except in the main port of Zanzibar which is on the western side of the island facing the mainland and it would be pretty hard to hide anything there because the main town was also located next to the port. Ships came in and out -- East German merchant ships, a few Russian and American We had Farrell Lines still serving Zanzibar in those days. There was no interruption in that traffic. We saw an occasional European ship and some Chinese, so stuff came in and out all the time. Usually when the Russians came in with military equipment they closed the port and unloaded at night and moved the equipment so that we didn't see much unless you really wanted to stay up to watch the port all night.

*Q: Thinking about the reporting ways it was a very doable. It was small enough and you could get around and there was enough hostility to make it kind of fun.*

PICKERINTG: It was 52 miles long and 22 miles wide. We had a Land Rover and I made a practice to go all over the wildest and oddest places on the island so I got a chance to see them all although there wasn't much else to do. With a Land Rover you could go anywhere including narrow rutted beat up roads and along the beaches of which there were many. There were beautiful beaches, particularly on the eastern side of the island and we used to go with our friends in the consulate corps, out to the eastern side of the island on Sunday. At times or we would rent a boat to go swimming from small coral islets. Later, we got a boat for the consulate to go to a whole series of islets between Zanzibar and the mainland where you could go out and spend a Saturday or a Sunday having picnics, swimming. The boat would be available for an evacuation if we ever needed it. We never did. The water was superb and the shelling was magnificent. If you fished, and I did, you could find lots of fish. The reefs were beautiful, it was wonderful for snorkeling. Nobody in those days scuba dived because we didn't have adequate facilities for refilling pressure tanks or training. People later came and I think did some scuba diving.

*Q: How about the British presence there?*

PICKERING: Well it was interesting. Among the consular corps we had the various communist state representatives that I have noted. The British had a deputy high commission, essentially a consulate, in Zanzibar, when I arrived. My then British colleague was a former colonial service officer with excellent Swahili, but the British were forced to leave when Southern Rhodesia declared unilaterally independence. I think in '66, so we overlapped for a while but not for a long period of time. The British had a beautiful residence on the sea in Zanzibar town across the park from our consulate, next to the offices of Cable and Wireless then a large UK communications firm which managed the undersea cables leading in and out of Zanzibar. (Interestingly enough both buildings are now combined with a new garden and pool in the Serena Hotel, an Indian-run operation in near central Zanzibar.).

*Q: How did the writ of Dar es Salaam play out both from the government that was in Dar es Salaam and also from our embassy, I mean, impacted on you?*

PICKERING: Well, it was a constant struggle on the Tanzanian side. We were in a sense totally isolated so we did our own reporting and usually we sent it both to Dar es Salaam and Washington. Communication was by teletype. We had a teletype station and we had our own small encryption apparatus. We had some very rudimentary stuff to begin with and we later got a better machine to operate with. All of us had to know how to do it and most of us ended up doing our own messages although my secretary, who was the wife of the admin officer, did most of the message traffic during the daytime. It would not have been wise for her to travel out in the evening especially alone. If we got a call at night, we had to go in and we would take care of it ourselves if it was an emergency, because we all knew how to run the machine, open the safe and deal with the vault.

It was interesting that there were other people who were present in town from the west. We had a one-man French consulate. When I first arrived there they had a Frenchman and several Comorians. The Comoro Islands are between Zanzibar and Madagascar but closer to Madagascar. They spoke in the Comoros enough of a form of Swahili that it was mutually intelligible with Zanzibar. There was a fairly large Comorian community in Zanzibar some of whom had participated in the revolution. In fact, the chief of protocol who ran the foreign ministry in Zanzibar had been born in Comoros. Then part way through my time the Frenchman was replaced by a White Russian, a former Legionnaire in the French Legion, as kind of a farewell post for him. He was an interesting man, his French was not much better than mine.

We had an Israeli who was alone. We became very good friends and we've stayed in touch over the years. He was there to keep an eye on things as well. He would go in and out and had to leave his post to go to Dar es Salaam to send messages home. The Israelis had a good embassy in Dar es Salaam. (Later the Israelis were forced out after the Yom Kippur conflict. We acquired their former Embassy building in Dar es Salaam and it was badly damaged in the 1998 Embassy bombing). My Israeli colleague became the chief staff officer of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee -- the most powerful sub body of the Israeli parliament. He was in place in Jerusalem in that job when I served as Ambassador to Israel some twenty years later. We also had a small group of Ghanaian teachers who had been on the island prior to the revolution as well as a South Korean physician in charge of the World Health Organizations malaria program.

*Q: Well it sounds a bit like you had a lot of foreigners sitting on this little islands looking at each other. It seems like that.*

PICKERING: Well we had a certain amount of that and then we had a few British left over working for a number of the trading companies that were still working on the East African coast and on supervised the port. Others served as doctors and one was a dentist. It was not a large foreign community.

Perhaps the most interesting member of the foreign community was a British citizen who had come to Zanzibar I think in the '30s and had gone completely native. He lived with his local wife on a small lime tree plantation in the center of the island. His name was Shelton. When the British deputy high commissioner left he said would I please look after Shelton for him and I said sure I would. Shelton would come into town every once in a while with baskets of limes on



the local bus and come back. When I didn't see him for a while, I decided to go out and find him. The Swahili's called him "Bwana Shetani", Swahilizing 'Shelton'. "Shetani" in Swahili (and Arabic) means 'devil', but he was well thought of and he had good friends on the island. I found out he had come to Africa after the First World War to southern Nyasaland (now Malawi) where he tried farming without much success, then moved to Tanganyika and then Zanzibar.

*Q: Did Nyerere come out there much or how did that work?*

PICKERING: No, there was a constant struggle with the mainland, first to get control of the military forces and then to amalgamate the parties. It took decades to get this all done. Next they worked to put this government in its appropriate place. It was the kind of provincial government with separate authorities coming out of the constitution, which was written after they joined up. Nyerere was forever patient with them, but kept some heat on occasionally had to wag his finger at the communists who encouraged more separation from Zanzibar, particularly the East Germans, who were a constant problem, The West Germans on the mainland insisted they weren't going to have any West German aid program and threatened to leave. Of course, the West Germans were very important to the mainland because they were seen as successors to German East Africa which ruled the place before the First World War.

*Q: The Holstein Doctrine was in effect then?*

PICKERING: It did and it had been breached in substance and de facto by the East German set up in Zanzibar.

*Q: Did our embassy, did they make any demands on you or were you, I'm speaking of the consulate, sort of doing reporting and all of that and the embassy was far away?*

PICKERING: The embassy was only 45 miles away in Dar es Salaam, but it was kind of an infinite distance almost a planetary distance in terms of ease of access. We occasionally would have AID people over to look at the school project and to talk with us about that. USIS folks also came over. Occasionally, embassy people would come over for a break or get a chance to see Zanzibar if they hadn't. The ambassador visited a couple of times (Bill Leonhart once and then John Burns) and we took him around and made protocol calls and did the usual thing. We were not at this point over run or over directed from the embassy. We had a very independent reporting post mentality. We knew what was going on in the island quite well. We were left alone to develop and exploit our local resources and capabilities. Travel was bureaucratically restrained by the Zanzibaris and it took time and patience to arrange to make the trip, even from Dar es Salaam. I think we did a fairly good job of keeping everybody up to date on what was happening. We had these occasional problems like the shutting down of the library to deal with and occasionally we needed help from the embassy to straighten out those kinds of things out by talking to Nyerere about the fact that he needed to get the folks on Zanzibar a little bit more under control. He didn't welcome that, but was part of their long term effort gradually to absorb Zanzibar or bring it closer.

*Q: By the time you were there there weren't demonstrations?*

PICKERING: No they had all taken place right at the time of the revolution. Don Petterson bore the brunt of those but we had no demonstrations that I can recall while I was there and almost no threats we could identify while we were there.

*Q: Well then you were there from '64 to what '66?*

PICKERING: From April '65 until mid '67 when John Burns who was then ambassador in Dar es Salaam had asked me to come over and be DCM as my next assignment.

*Q: So you went to Dar from '67 to '69. By this time Nyerere was the man the whole time, he had been the man from the beginning wasn't he? How did John Burns operate? He was my first boss as consul general in Frankfurt back in '55.*

PICKERING: Really.

*Q: I can remember that.*

PICKERING: John made sure we knew what his interests were and left me a lot room in the running of the embassy as DCM -- looking after reporting, making sure things were running well. We had a really great crew of people; they didn't need an awful lot of kind of heavy-handed supervision.

*Q: Who were they?*

PICKERING: George Roberts, was the political officer and Jim Curran was the Economic section. Before George, Terry McNamara. I forget who did the consular work. Earl Bellinger who has just died was our admin officer; he was a great admin officer. Then we had an AID Mission, which was probably bigger than the embassy, and the Peace Corp Program. John Burns was very interested in the Peace Corps -- he was interested in many things and liked to travel. I sort of held the fort although I had plenty of opportunities to travel when he was there.

*Q: Looking at it within the system you were pretty junior weren't you to be a DCM?*

PICKERING: I was, I forget sort of what level I was by then but it was pretty junior.

*Q: I was just wondering whether you ran across some scraped elbows or something like that then.*

PICKERING: I didn't, I think folks, most of them knew me from Zanzibar. They had been over or I had been over to see them. We seemed to get along all well. I entered the service in '59; this was '67 so it was eight years after I was in the service so it was fast.

*Q: By the time of '69 was there a distinct feeling that there was an African corps; I'm using within the State Department context? I mean of African specialists and all because not too long before we didn't really have.*

PICKERING: No, we were building the Africa specialty but it was not there with long experience. A number of us had language training and that helped. I found the language training particularly in Zanzibar enormously valuable and so I studied. Actually in Zanzibar it was a very interesting experience because Frank had also studied Swahili there and did very well. He, of course, was gone by the time I had got there and you know the conditions under which he had left and then when I arrived I said to Don Petterson I would like to kind of keep up my Swahili. He said, "Well, why don't you do what Frank did." Frank went by the Anglican Convent, there was one nun whose name was Sister Veronica. She was then in her late 70s or early 80s. She had come to Tanganyika right after the First World War and walked all over the country and her Swahili was really excellent. I would go by in the morning before I started work and spend an hour with Sister Veronica in lessons and conversation. She was a good teacher and a strong taskmaster. She helped me go through a lot of additional grammar. We used local books and we did a lot of reading. I read the local newspaper, which she found fascinating because she hadn't been reading it. It was full of new Swahili circumlocutions and created words for all the communist jargon and vocabulary. Imperialism was translated as ubeberu -- "male goat". So I learned a lot. She helped me with the background (etymology) of the new vocabulary and together we figured out what the words meant. Then to have some variety and new things to study, I looked around for books to buy. By then the Russians and the Chinese had flooded Zanzibar with Swahili literature, a lot of it just translations from Russian. So I began to read that. We read a Russian geography that had been translated on Eastern Siberia -- on Chukotka. I read a Chinese economic text on Chinese development that had been translated into Swahili. I did the local examinations in Zanzibar for the Higher School Certificate in Swahili which were left over from British colonial days and not necessarily very easy, but happy to say that I passed. Sister Veronica found the Chukotka book interesting because it deal with tribal type issues in an Arctic environment where she had never lived and worked.

*Q: Were the Chinese and Soviets, particularly the Soviets, did they have a rather extensive program getting students to come there and go to learn?*

PICKERING: I think they did, they worked it hard. The Chinese more than the Soviets. The Chinese had local people who had been in China as refugees from British-Arab colonial rule. They had been trained in China in political subjects and had worked in Radio Beijing on their Swahili program and who had come back after the revolution. Some of them became members of the revolutionary council and one, Ali Sultan Issa, education minister. His offices were next to the US consulate in a building previously devoted to dealing with liberated slaves. He sported a 45 on his belt and spent a lot of time propagandizing. I worked with him, but more importantly with an Arab who was his permanent secretary, who survived the revolution and was my principal contact in building the technical college I spoke about.

He later left Zanzibar and went to Oman and I later received him when I was ambassador to Jordan. He had become permanent secretary in the Omani ministry of education. He did me the compliment of telling me that when I first spoke to him on the telephone in Swahili, he thought I was a local, which was very nice compliment!

*Q: What were relations with Tanzania in the '67- '69s?*

PICKERING: With the mainland more friendly but with areas of tension. We had an American farmer who had his property confiscated. This is always a mess and it was always kind of an albatross hanging around our neck to see if we could get compensation. We had spent some years seeing if we could negotiate an outcome and then we turned up the heat a bit. I don't think it was resolved in my time there.

We had a huge AID program, which was doing a lot of interesting things, and a Peace Corps program and I think that we all wanted to have better relations but there was a zero sum game being played with the Russians and the Chinese. The Chinese at that point had said that they would build the railroad to Zambia which the Tanzanians and the Zambians wanted very much because once Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, had declared unilateral independence under the white leadership they were cut off from the South African export links. Because the then existing railway went through Southern Rhodesia they wouldn't use it. So the Chinese agreed to build the railroad.

We had a parallel project to rebuild and pave the Great North Road which led to Zambia. It ran north for a while from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro and then went southwest across the country and into Zambia. It was then the lifeline for Zambia. Early on in that period, we helped to develop a system of trucking in fuel in tankers to relieve a major shortage in Zambia. And they needed a lot of fuel in to run the economy, particularly the copper mines. It was shipped in a large number of Italian-built, Fiat tankers over this pretty horrendous dirt road. They modified the tankers by building racks underneath the tanks so they could slide in copper bars. The tankers took fuel in and then came out with the tanks empty but with these racks full of copper bars. It was interesting to travel the road and pretty hairy because these guys would drive day and night at a mad clip over this pretty much almost destroyed dirt road. It was particularly bad in the wet season. You would see numbers of tankers turned over, wheels up, by the roadside where the driver hadn't made a curve and where for some other reason they had an accident. It was a pretty hairy road for quite a long while. In the end, even before the railroad was finished, the road which was paved by the US, the IBRD and others, was supplemented by a small diameter oil pipeline from Dar es Salaam.

*Q: How did we feel about Nyerere at that time, because Nyerere was the man for so long there?*

PICKERING: Well, I think everybody was very attached to him. Nyerere had been obviously a bright spot on everybody's horizon. There was disappointment in the fact that Nyerere had so much time for the Chinese and the Russians. That sort of tended to sour the feeling over time. There was disappointment that he had turned from what was the pure London School of Economics socialist idea of allowing people to work together communally in their own villages to create a kind of socialist agricultural settlement to imposing full scale rural communalization. Frustrated that only three or four such villages had been created in four or so years he allowed his political leadership which was much less capable than he to impose these "Ujamaa" or "socialist villages" all over the country. It included requiring people to move out of established farming communities into land chosen by appointed leaders who had no idea of what they were doing. They got to places where farming couldn't work because of land quality and poor water availability. It produced a lot of turmoil, a lot of hardship and a lot of impoverishment by doing this.

Nyerere wrote while we were there wonderful essays on education and on development, which everybody read with admiration. Had he been able actually to implement what he had written in the essays, he would have been an even grander person than what he is seen as today. It was very clear that one of his problems was that while he was a wonderful speaker, had a great mind and conceptually a very able person he had less practical experience about how you implement things in a democracy. At the same time he wanted to keep his political balance in the world community and so he accepted Communist military aid which drove the west nuts because they saw that as the first spearhead in the intrusion into East Africa of serious communist influence. In the zero sum game of the Cold War, that was seen to be a very dangerous proposition.

He was the darling in particular of the Scandinavians who put a lot of money into Mainland Tanzania and into the rest of East Africa. The World Bank and the fund were very favorable on Nyerere. He spoke to them about his goals and projects using a language that they both understood and that they found very positive. His capability to deliver was restricted by many obstacles both domestic and foreign -- mostly lack of a strong cadre of skilled and efficient leaders.

Mainland Tanzania was lucky in that it escaped some of the worst aspect of tribalism because it had 122 tribal groups, none of them big enough to dominate. Some of them would have liked to had they been afforded the opportunity. Tanzania had a fairly even split with Muslims perhaps slightly outnumbering Christians. Traditional religion still played a large role and influenced as well both Islam and Christianity. Some of the tribal groups were very much behind or seemed to be behind. The Masai were difficult to change and some of the tribal groups akin to the Masai were similarly hard to change. Others were very go ahead and very development oriented. The Chagga in the North who grew coffee in the mountains and developed banana and coffee culture were good and successful farmers with strong coops. Others grew cotton below the Serengeti in the irrigated areas. They had the diamond mine that functioned fairly effectively with original links with South Africa. They had some other mining, but not an awful lot. The country was pretty poor when I was there.

*Q: One of the things that always struck me was Nyerere seemed to have absolutely charmed the pants off everybody who talked to him including our ambassadors and visitors and you know, have the Scandinavians absolutely delighted but at the same time he had taken a country which was not bad agriculturally and kind of destroyed it.*

PICKERING: Well that was particularly true with these ideas he had implemented on the so-called "Ujamaa" villages. He really wanted to go after corruption and so he limited everybody with what they could own and the size of their houses. He attempted to enforce that while others just found ways to get around him. That all developed subsequent to my being there, but in the early days when I was there it was a very much a hair-shirt, socialist development oriented kind of focus. He wanted to control corruption and had a sense of its pressures on the society and economy. Nyerere had a tremendous amount to do with that. You are right, he was looked up to particularly by the intellectuals in the West and by others who were there as a leader who was quite amazing in his own abilities. It was unique almost in Africa. He had a sophisticated understanding of the western world and what was going on in the West, but was also in a number

of ways, a little bit more than we like to think, prisoner of some of his own ideology and of some of the advisors around him.

*Q: Sometimes from my perspective I've never surveyed it but the London School of Economics is a fame and socialist now seem to have done more harm too much of the colonial world than colonialism itself.*

PICKERING: I think that is probably worth a hard look. It is true that he had a collaborator and a colleague named Joan Wicken who is very well known. Joan was part eminence grise of that society in a real sense. She helped as a source of ideas and also as an intellectual colleague for Nyerere. She played a large role in some of the speech drafting -- things that were very competently and very well done. I have talked about the socialist villages and some of the failures and problems there.

*Q: Were we in the embassy, in a way it would be almost our role since the Brits were overly involved in some of the poison that entered the socialist places but saying, "Hey, this emperor doesn't have clothes on", I mean were we calling...*

PICKERING: It took us a while to begin to say that. We began when I was there on some of the things because we felt it was time to do that but there was also certainly a kind of reverence for Nyerere that made people want to be careful about criticizing too heavily.

*Q: Really, we are really talking about, it's not a personality cult it's a personality aura.*

PICKERING: In part, but in a very moderate, thoughtful and in the main intellectually respectable way.

*Q: That really took particularly I think the western powers.*

PICKERING: Well I think the West wanted Africa to succeed in the post-colonial period, in the struggle for development. The United States certainly did and most of the Brits did as well. We were prepared to maybe run along with somebody like Nyerere who looked like the philosopher king more than he did the kind of, you know, Emperor Jones. He was a very attractive man and a wonderful interlocutor and an interesting person to talk to and also had enough strength in the state that he could get things done. We also had big differences in our own view over one-party states and I think that we never found it easy to reconcile ourselves with a one-party Tanzania, despite all of the discussions about the fact that within the party they had elections. Over time it became more and more transparently one party-ism. To hand it to Nyerere, as things went on, he opened up the system, admitted his mistakes, brought other people in and allowed change to take place. I think probably as much as his inherent wisdom we recognized in the end, in terms of making a full scale evaluation of his leadership of the country, that he left a legacy and I think a set of strengths that probably are pretty good compared to where we are in other places in Africa.

*Q: What were the influences during the '67- '69 period of Kenya and Uganda...?*

PICKERING: Well the East African community that the British had left behind was breaking up. So by then the currency had broken up, the airlines had broken up, the ports and harbors and railways were not quite but they were in the UK-organized East African Community. In effect, one saw something that was potentially a very useful model, and something that they have now tried to re-create, going down because of a new, heightened emphasis in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania on local nationalism. It was an effort to build up local feelings as opposed to bringing together East Africa. There was always a concern, particularly Tanzania, that Nairobi would become the capital and they would be under the thumb of Kenya and the Kikuyu or somebody else.

*Q: Was Obote still in?*

PICKERING: For some of that time, I can't remember when he died and I left. Who was the guy in Kampala then -- Idi Amin? My names are all gone. Anyway, Obote later took refuge in Tanzania and then not long after I left in 1969, the Tanzanians went in and chased out the folks who had taken over.

*Q: Were the opposing powers the East Germans, the Czechs, Soviets, Chinese now, were they really active competition with them or were they doing their thing and we were doing our thing?*

PICKERING: I think there was some active competition. There weren't internecine street fights and that sort of thing, no violence or any of that kind, but we were concerned about the inroads they were making. They had pretty much a dominant position in the military and that worried us. I don't think it should have but it did. They built some large grandiose projects; we couldn't muster the funds to do it. We were more interested in long-term development and focused on health, some on agriculture and some on infrastructure.

*Q: Were you able to get much of an exchange program going there?*

PICKERING: A large number of people came to the States in one form or another -- for AID participant training, USIS training and we had a few people go there. Dar es Salaam University was sort of a hot bed of fairly radical socialism in those days. Stokely Carmichael showed up at a time when things were particularly bad when I was there.

I remember we had an American gentleman from Long Island who came, who had taken most of the savings of a small black Baptist church and had a warrant issued against him in New York and he showed up. His name was Calvin Coolidge Cobb, and we sought extradition -- sort of mindlessly because we knew we weren't going to get it, but we did. We had a very good law firm, but they were Indian lawyers and so that added to the problems. At the end of the time, Stokely Carmichael came and identified Calvin Coolidge Cobb as a struggler for Afro-American rights. It didn't fool too many people at the top but for a lot of the people at the bottom sort of heated this up. I remember the Attorney General, who was a very wise and very bright young man told me that, "You understand that we're not going to give extradition." I said, "Yes, I'd gotten that message a long time ago. That was too bad. I thought was a mistake because the gentleman had committed a crime in the United States and taken the money from people who were Afro-Americans and who were very poor and who had saved it and given it to their

church.” He said, “Yes, we realize that and” he said, “I personally am chagrined, but I give you my absolute word of honor he will get nowhere near money in our country.”

*Q: What sort of relations did you find with the government itself?*

PICKERING: The government was correct but difficult. They saw us as imperialist and as the Vietnam conflict went on and that became worse as I said and relations were soured by Martin Luther King’s assassination, by Bobby Kennedy’s assassination. It was a very bad period with riots in Washington. Those kinds of things afflicted us all in the ‘60s and in Africa in particular it went down very badly -- to sour the relations and create distance between us. It was hard to make friends and contacts. It was useful to have the local language and that helped break down some barriers.

While I was there the head of FRELIMO, the Liberation Movement in Mozambique, Eduardo Mondlane was assassinated by what we were told and had every reason to believe was a book bomb. The finger went to the Portuguese intelligence service which had the motive in effect to get rid of him. That caused a lot of problems. He was staying at the home of an American friend when the bomb was detonated as he opened the parcel containing the book. We were suspected at first of being engaged. We helped them in the investigation. They had recovered a similar bomb before it was detonated and could analyze the technology. It was made to look Soviet. His American host spent some time in jail before we could secure a release. That helped us a little bit dealing with this.

We saw lots of liberation movements. We had wide contacts with them to the extent that we could. The African-American Institute ran a large school, mainly focused on these liberation movement folks. A lot of people from Mozambique went there, it was an important institution for preserving our contacts with people from organizations like SWAPO (South West African Peoples Organization), and SWANU (South West African National Union) and ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) and ANC (African National Congress). We were able to keep contacts up with a lot of those people.

*Q: What was our relation, how did we deal with these? Were we encouraging, discouraging, how did you approach these various liberation movements?*

PICKERING: We approached them from the point of view that basically we were friends, we sympathized with their objectives, we were not supporting the colonial countries in retention of their position in the region, but we were not prepared to finance or support military activities. We did finance and provide education and relief activities to the people who had come out as refugees and provided them opportunities to study in the United States. We did the same with the Tanzanians.

It was very interesting because it was the time of the civil war in Nigeria and one of the issues we followed interestingly enough or maybe not interestingly enough was that question. Nyerere was very supportive of the breakaway Igbo folks in Biafra. In part mainly we believed because he was a Catholic and there were many Catholics among the Igbo in Biafra. Maybe there was a



church role in there, but it was fascinating to see that the Portuguese were also supportive of this and Tanzania was engaged in transshipping by air from the Portuguese's material to the Biafrans.

*Q: The French were too.*

PICKERING: The French were too and we saw arms coming in to Dar es Salaam from those countries and then going across the continent in chartered planes we assumed to places within or within reach of Biafra. It was clear that circumstances made strange bedfellows.

*Q: Did Biafran war was very interesting one, it had strong components of Biafra within our Congress, for example, and also with the "glitterati" of Hollywood and the jet set and all this.*

PICKERING: There were fighter, missionaries and fliers who went in and out to help them out.

*Q: How about did the UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) or Southern Rhodesia play any role in particular?*

PICKERING: Sure, Southern Rhodesia when I was talking about Zimbabwe it played a huge role and the UDI caused a polarization and they shut down the British in effect.

*Q: But the British were, what were they asking, the British weren't supporting the UDI.*

PICKERING: Well they thought the British were an anomaly; they certainly weren't militarily opposing it. They certainly weren't going to use force against their kith and kin in Rhodesia and so that caused a lot of consternation and difficulty.

*Q: Did we get involved?*

PICKERING: No, we stayed clear of it.

*Q: What about Nyerere?*

PICKERING: We may have by osmosis gotten tarred a little bit tarred with the UDI brush but I never had any problems in Zanzibar and I don't think we did in Dar es Salaam.

*Q: What about the UN (United Nations) vote in all that? Did we have any influence on Tanzania?*

PICKERING: I think we had very little influence on Tanzania at the UN.

*Q: On Tanganyika, it's Tanganyika.*

PICKERING: Tanzania.

*Q: Tanzania, that's right.*

PICKERING: Salim Salim later became Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) who was from Zanzibar -- from Pemba actually, a small islands north of Zanzibar. He became their representative in the UN, played a very active role in the China vote which disturbed George Bush senior no end because he was there at the time. I don't remember if that happened after I was there or not. They played a fairly active role in the United Nations in the center of the African group and in the center of what we would have considered the malevolent non-aligned and the unhappy non-aligned in that sense. I remember on one occasion, because I had spent a lot of time working in disarmament in Geneva, I wrote Nyerere a letter on the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) in which I went through what I thought were all the good reasons why Tanzania should support the NPT. After a long while, I got a letter back from Joan Wicken explaining how this was denying these wonderful people their God-given right to have nuclear weapons. I thought that was entirely crazy but it was interesting to see how they looked at it, some of that I think under the influence of the Chinese who were then not necessarily very happy about the NPT.

*Q: Of the Soviets and Chinese was there rivalry or...?*

PICKERING: It was apparent both in Zanzibar and then later in Dar es Salaam there was rivalry between the Soviets and Chinese. How deeply we understood this was hard to know. I think that we felt that there were at least superficial differences and they were not working hand and glove by then.

It was interesting, I was in Zanzibar at the time the cultural revolution started. It was amazing to see while they would not speak to us, we identified and knew the Chinese because we sat in the same government-sponsored social engagements. Immediately all the women who had been wearing wonderful Chinese dresses disappeared and those who came back, came back in Mao suits -- as if they had been working in the fields. You saw that flip overnight. In Zanzibar, the Russians were extremely uncomfortable with the weather. The consul general was a man of a certain weight and found the heat stifling. I don't know if they didn't provide him with air-conditioning but he and the rest of the Russian consulate who were not friendly at all, but occasionally would talk to us, rued the day they ever got there and thought that they had been handed the worst possible assignments by the Soviet bureaucrats in Moscow.

*Q: Were there any major developments in our relations or in the country while you were there?*

PICKERING: Almost none. At one point Lyndon Johnson flirted with the idea of coming out and we got some alert cables but that never panned out.

*Q: You probably were saved, that's like having a very large hurricane hit you, particularly in a very small country like that.*

PICKERING: Absolutely. No, the only thing I owed to Lyndon Johnson was that he got the bathroom in the ambassador's residence in El Salvador done for a visit there and the shower was in great shape when I arrived.

*Q: I've talked to an administrative officer trying to get the showerhead at a certain height...*

PICKERING: Yep and you had to get the toilet seats all removed so they could put his own in. I don't think a lot of things of great consequence happened. We saw a general deterioration in relations; we saw general movements toward what we would call "a rougher kind of socialism" and one party-ism. The radical fringe in Zanzibar for example led by a man by the name of Mohammed Ali Babu had been marginalized and then gone to the mainland. They allowed him to become a minister, but they then marginalized him further. The mainland was moving gradually, but almost imperceptibly to take over things on the island in keeping the island kind of locked away and keeping them from doing a lot of harm at first and then gradually trying to absorb them. It took a large amount of their time without much real pay back. The mainland was a lot more open, a lot less Islamic but still nevertheless Muslims were well treated. The mainland was also a lot more diverse, a lot more interested in a kind of westernization and development, but had very little way in the way of resources to do it and very little capability and an increasingly influential group in the leading party that wanted to have a command economy under government control.

*Q: For you personally and for your fellow officers serving there, was there a perceptible change in attitude towards African independence? At first you only notice this glow, this is going to be wonderful and all sorts of things good are going to happen?*

PICKERING: We were still living in the afterglow, but beginning to trend toward reality by the time I left in '69. I was charge for my last four or five months and we began to see more of the realities popping up and felt more confident and free to call them as we saw them.

*Q: I think it is a time particularly when Soapy Williams was there who really couldn't say ill of anything that happened in Africa.*

PICKERING: No we could, I mean Zanzibar was the sort of place were we had really no ambitions. The mainland was a little more sensitive about it. The folks in Washington were a little more sensitive about the mainland but Joe Palmer had taken over and Joe was different than Soapy. Joe it seemed to me was perfectly prepared to hear that things were not simply splendid everywhere.

*Q: When you were charge, did you have any dealings with Nyerere?*

PICKERING: Yes, on a couple of things. I had one really outrageous thing. They sent us some teargas without asking as I recall. I don't think it came in a pouch; it came in a package by air and the Tanzanians looked into it because it wasn't pouch protected. The Tanzanians kept it and they were irate that we were going to use teargas to gas their people. So I had to explain to Nyerere personally that all of our embassies around the world had it. It was to prevent, because of the Cold War, people inciting folks against us. and I gave him three or four for instances where folks had tried to take over the embassy by force and the teargas was the most humane way to deal with that and it was to defend our people, not our property. We were all given it, we didn't ask for it, it wasn't a choice and supposed to keep it for that particular purpose and he said, "Well you know the people in Tanzania would never do that to the Americans." So we agreed we'd ship it out to get rid of the problem but it was something he was quite feisty and

irate about. I did that meeting with him in Swahili and had to invent a term for tear gas since it wasn't in the dictionary! He knew what I was talking about!

*Q: You didn't get a chance of him turning his charm on you?*

PICKERING: No, no, there was no charm. Of course that may have been while John Burns was away and while I was acting, but we had eventually allowed that to fade back into the weeds!

*Q: Ship it back in the pouch.*

PICKERING: No we couldn't ship it in the pouch, they were not allowed to ship it in the pouch.

*Q: You left there in '69.*

PICKERING: September of '69.

*Q: Whither?*

PICKERING: I had thought and the African bureau had talked to me about coming back maybe in a job as the country director. But nobody from personnel spoke to me and nothing came along. Ron Spiers at that time had just taken over the bureau of Political/Military Affairs. He in the meantime had been in touch with me some months before and asked would I come back and be the deputy director (deputy assistant secretary level) his only deputy. I said I would love to do that, it was terrific. I signed up for that job and then Gerry Smith came after me to me to do a similar but different job in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). I told Jerry that I had already agreed to go and work with Ron. I felt that once made, it was very important to keep that commitment and thanked him very much. Ron had given me a great start some years before, and I admired him and knew I would enjoy working for him, and that being in the Department would give some opportunities I would not normally get in ACDA to meet the top levels at State. Then when I arrived back in Washington everyone said they were surprised and shocked that I had taken a job not in AF. I went and did that job and enjoyed it immensely.

*Q: With Ron Spiers?*

PICKERING: With Ron, yes.

*Q: For how long?*

PICKERING: I came back in September of '69 and I worked with Ron until August of '73.

*Q: The Bureau of Political and...*

PICKERING: Military Affairs.

*Q: Was it a bureau at that time?*

PICKERING: It was and it had been set up and Phil Farley was the first director, it had a director, not an assistant secretary. Then I think Ron took Phil's place. Ron had been political counselor in London and Secretary Rogers asked him to come back and take up the lead when Phil Farley left that bureau. Phil had done it I think alone and Ron wanted a deputy.

*Q: This was the time, wasn't there sort of a Spiers doing the leg work, a remarkable collection of Foreign Service officers?*

PICKERING: It was. We had a very, very, we had some fine foreign service officers; we had a very strong group. We also had some very good civil servants, and military officers. We had about eight offices. I looked after roughly half of them but since we carpooled we would usually have our staff meeting on the way home or on the way in, in the morning. It was very easy to operate. I looked after a group of these offices and Ron looked after another group, but we each knew what was happening in the others bailiwick. I think I did munitions control, the military base operations, we had an office doing that, we had an office doing atomic energy and I did that. I forget what else. Ron did most of the arms control, but I did a lot of work in it particularly stayed up with it and became part of that because we each had to sort of substitute for the other. Then after a while we got started on SALT (Strategic Arms Limitations Talk). Ray Garthoff came over as both the State Department negotiator and a deputy in the bureau. He had both positions but was almost entirely focused on the SALT negotiations both working on the delegation and then back in Washington in between with the policy planning. Ron spent a lot of his time on the strategic arms limitation policy the as well. It was one of our big issues.

*Q: I'm interviewing and I will do another one tomorrow with Roz Ridgeway...*

PICKERING: Oh that is great.

*Q: And she is talking about how she was being mentored all over the place, she was really learning the trade in that bureau at that time.*

PICKERING: Roz was not in the bureau when I was there although I had worked with Roz when she was in Latin American affairs. We testified together on US Navy ship loans...

*Q: Maybe a little earlier.*

PICKERING: She was in ARA (American Republic Affairs) by the time I was there and I worked on foreign military sales in leasing and I remember one time went to the Hill to testify on leasing submarines to Peru and someplace else and Roz really kind of had it all organized and managed and sort of led me through the whole thing.

*Q: When you arrived there what were the issues in Political/Military Affairs that you found sort of have priority?*

PICKERING: Certainly strategic arms limitations was critically important, non-proliferation, we had a raison d'être which was to provide the State Department with expertise that it had never had in any organized way on this series of questions and issues regarding the military in the

broadest sense. ACDA was in existence but we also became the State Department's managing focal point on arms control questions. We had to operate a munitions control licensing activity, which was then led by a former Air Force colonel who was really a whiz and had things very much under control. We had relatively few problems in that area. We created a very high-powered strategy shop. Leon Sloss and Les Brown who were both really extremely good, grew up in the strategy community and put us in a position to work closely with Defense. They were both senior civil servants and provided us with serious inputs on Defense Department strategy and thinking.

*Q: When you say strategy what do you mean?*

PICKERING: Military strategy in essence. What positions was the Defense Department going to take on force levels and how do they affect our foreign policy, what implications it had for foreign policy overseas? How to think about that and what the State Department ought to do in terms of where the Defense Department was going on this series of questions. Of course, there were tremendous battles over which nuclear posture was the right one. Should we have a nuclear posture and plan oriented at city busting or should we have a nuclear posture and plan oriented totally, exclusively at military targets. We played a role in the Defense Department's putting together this single integrated operating plan for nuclear attack. We had views on a lot of those issues, which tended to reflect what our allies thought, how we would fight a nuclear war god-forbid and what kinds of things we ought to be buying. We spent a lot of time looking at nuclear testing which was moving on and then some of the ancillary agreements that were picked up afterward dealing with nuclear testing. Would we allow the use of nuclear explosives for civilian purposes and if so, what kind of agreement should we make there?

*Q: You are talking about a nuclear explosive stuff...*

PICKERING: Explosives yes.

*Q: Excavate canals and things like that were all around.*

PICKERING: That was all around.

*Q: I have to ask, where did the State Department come down with city busting or arms...*

PICKERING: I think that our view was that creating weapons for total mass destruction was worrisome. On the other hand, we were concerned that if we created a force only to "fight a war" we would mislead ourselves into thinking that wars were winnable and therefore feasible and even useful.

*Q: It sounds very philosophical in a way.*

PICKERING: It is and it was and it involved a lot of the kind of arms control thinking and military strategic thinking at the time which continued on. We had this very high-powered shop that did a lot of this work, which was very closely connected to DOD (Department of Defense).

*Q: Did you get involved, Edwin Teller just died, but one thinks of him, as people talking about well you know, if we do it this way we will only lose four million and they'll twenty million. I mean...*

PICKERING: There was some of that and that was part of the thinking of some of the folks in the Defense Department. I think most people realized that you didn't want to lose millions of people. We were developing ideas about deterrence. Kissinger was in the White House running his show and thinking about a lot of these things. He had been a primary formulator of a lot of the ideas which we were aware of. He wanted to run the disarmament negotiations and he tried to do it behind everybody's back in terms of direct contacts. Garthoff was so able and the Russians thought so well of him and his language was so good that they would usually tell us through Ray what was going on in the Kissinger channel, so we usually knew what was happening there.

*Q: This whole sort of spying within our own government I guess...particularly under Kissinger. What was the feeling towards disarmament? Was this something everybody had it before but thinking it's not going to happen?*

PICKERING: No, I think quite the contrary. Most people were fairly skeptical. The Russians had tried out general and complete disarmament earlier on and that was seen as sort of farcical and unrealistic, but it was also the time when non-proliferation treaty had caught on and was being ratified and seen as a contributor. It was clear too that strategic limitations were seen as being able to get at the nuclear arms race and the propensity of the US and the Soviet Union to spend a lot of money building up to counter other side. Even while the other side was building up to counter you and it was seen to be valuable and helpful to begin to put a damper on that sort behavior. We were disturbed and discouraged that Kissinger didn't want, I think essentially for his relationships with the Pentagon and maybe with some uncertainties, to accept the opportunities to put a limit on multiple, independently targeted warheads, something that we have not been trying to claw our way back from for a long period of time. That was especially true given their capabilities and the fact that they didn't add much to stability and they didn't add anything to dominance if you wanted to put it that way, to achieving dominance because both sides could pursue them equally.

*Q: Was there sort of behind everything this, was it mutual mass destruction, the whole idea that really if the thing ever gets going we've reached the point where there won't be anything to clean up afterwards?*

PICKERING: I think everybody understood that. I think they understood the value of reinforcing deterrence and in fact using arms control as a way of making deterrence more effective. We were concerned about strategic stability. We didn't want a situation in which people would reach for their nuclear weapons very quickly. One could build a lot of communication, a lot of ability to be transparent, a lot of certainty about force levels. We thought it was worthwhile to try to avoid surprises, have strong early warning, serious efforts to have people not commit, and to keeping the arms race under control. We thought that there it was an interesting opportunity to build a much more stable structure in what was inherently a very dangerous situation.

*Q: This implies that your opposite numbers are thinking the same way too.*

PICKERING: It implies what was essentially true, that they were attracted to the ideas I think originally for propaganda purposes and also because they consistently ran behind us in most things even if only a little bit. While in space they got ahead and in some of the large rockets, they also knew in fact that there was a balance. They also began to understand and absorb a lot of the thinking that was going on in our part of the world and add to it themselves so they in a sense became converts fairly quickly. The fascinating thing was that in a lot of these negotiations, we had to tell the Soviet civilian negotiators about their own military, their own missile force, because the military wouldn't tell the civilian negotiators. They weren't cleared. We spent time educating the Russian civilian negotiators about what they had and how it worked and how it fit in and what the dangers were of the things they were doing as well as the stability that came about as a result of being able to put a cap on these things in transparent and verifiable ways.

*Q: How did you find dealing with the defense department at this time?*

PICKERING: There was a long running feud between Rogers and Laird that made it difficult...

*Q: Melvin Laird who was secretary...*

PICKERING: Melvin Laird, Secretary of Defense, and had come out of the Congress. With a good strong sense of pride and he didn't want State Department to be told anything about what Defense was doing. He created a strong organization in ISA (International Security Affairs) Bureau which was called the Defense Department's State Department. He inherited a very strong structure from Kennedy, Johnson and McNamara who also had the defense department play a strong role but a much more cooperative one than the Defense Department in the Nixon administration. It had become more conservative and more difficult to deal with as a result and there were not, as there were in the Kennedy administration, a lot of agreement between the two. Instead there was strong on-going background feud between the two and they used to send each other crappie letters every once in a while some of which I now lament I participated in drafting. The Defense Department tried to shut off PM (Political/Military) and to keep it out of their activities. They knew we had a very strong group and they knew that we had people who knew and understood where defense issues were going -- so there was a constant battle. Happily, we had people with good contacts over there who helped to play a constructive role.

*Q: Well you did have military officers attended to...*

PICKERING: We had quite a few.

*Q: They must have been in a difficult position...*

PICKERING: Well it worked well for us because we got very good people. We had people like Jack Chain who later became head of the Strategic Air Command before I was there, Bud Zumwalt had worked in ISA and in State and we got to know him fairly well so there were a lot of very good military officers working in that field, either in contact with us and some with us. That helped a lot and the military were less concerned about the feuding and turf battles. We had an exchange program with the military. It was very hard to get good Foreign Service officers to



go there and the military didn't treat them very well, they wanted to keep them isolated and the defense civilians even more so, so they weren't well used. We, on the other hand, did use the military very well and they sent us very good people. We had them in the regional bureaus and in some of the functional bureaus as well. That has continued to this day. The military tended to put better people in that program, they've been selected as comers within the military system.

*Q: I'm told that at some of the things like base negotiations and that sort of thing, we had a terrible time with the Defense Department because essentially they did not want to give up anything.*

PICKERING: That was always true and we watched that very carefully. We had a tremendously good team there. We had another civil servant who had worked with Ron in the London embassy, a man by the name of Jock Stoddart, who had come out of the Defense Department and understood the issues and ran the office that dealt with overseas bases and dealt with them extremely well. He was helpful with his old contacts in Defense, but even more with his knowledge of how to run things. Basically, that gave us another leg up because we played a tremendously important role in those negotiations. One set of negotiations was to set up the British Indian Ocean territories at that time, Diego Garcia, so that we could develop the base. That was an interesting negotiation, which had begun before I got there but was finished up while I was there.

*Q: How about the NSC (National Security Council)? Were they sort of a rogue element in this whole thing? I know Kissinger at that time?*

PICKERING: It depended on with whom you were working and on what subject. Kissinger went very strong for keeping State under control. I think he neither respected Bill Rogers nor treated him very well.

*Q: No he certainly didn't.*

PICKERING: As a result, there was a huge amount of tension in that area. Kissinger worked with Joe Sisco on Middle East peace things and didn't himself get involved in any serious way until just before he came over to State. He let Joe and Rogers run with it because it appeared he felt then it was a helpless cause. He used to kid Joe, when Joe became under secretary for him and said if this next effort fails we're calling it the Sisco plan.

*Q: There had been so many plans.*

PICKERING: Yes, very many. We got involved in the Middle East a lot, particularly on the arms sales side. And also on India-Pakistan, we got involved in the India-Pakistan war over Bangladesh. I was in the Situation Room the day Henry announced that he had dispatched the Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal and we were tilting toward Pakistan.

*Q: What was the purpose of that, do you know?*

PICKERING: In large measure he distrusted the Indians, didn't like them. The Pakistani's had been from his perspective faithful allies. They had or could him in China and that he thought we ought to keep this strong Muslim bulwark against the intrusion of communists into the region, not altogether necessarily totally congruent with history.

*Q: But it was also, you know, being a realist this East Pakistan was not going to exist.*

PICKERING: No, no it was going to go anyway. But he was not reconciled to that, even though the Pakistanis lost it long before the war came.

*Q: Why not go with who wins?*

PICKERING: No, I think he thought that East Pakistan was going to go, but he would try to save it as a way of continuing to maintain a strong relationship with the key Pakistani's even though in the end I suspect he knew that they weren't going to preserve this against the Bengali's and the Indians. He also saw the Indians as playing somewhat of a nefarious role encouraging the Bengali's to leave.

*Q: But what about this carrier? I mean what the hell was it going to do as a terrier group. Of course, this carrier group...*

PICKERING: Well this carrier group, the Enterprise. He just wanted to dispatch it to the region I think as a warning to the Indians and maybe even the Bengali's not to let things get too far out of hand, but there wasn't much else he could do. It was a purely presence mission. It irritated the hell out of the Indians; they have never forgotten.

*Q: I know it.*

PICKERING: It really irritated them.

*Q: Those fruital gestures, one wishes...*

PICKERING: It's taken us years to pick up the pieces and it still adds to uncertainty in India about where we are.

*Q: What about in looking at that area with Israel and arms control, what was happening nuclear wise in Israel from our perspective?*

PICKERING: We, I think, by that time knew were the Israeli's were -- everybody who wanted to look at it was told that maybe it was a better idea not to look at it. We didn't play a large role in trying to look into it to see where it was going, but it was clear that it was happening. It was in the press almost too much.

*Q: Well this is one of these things we here we have double standards. Was this troubling or was this just we're so used to having that double standard as regards Israel that...*

PICKERING: Well, it happened more under Johnson I think before I got back from Africa. And so I think that they looked at it and decided that there wasn't much that they were going to be able to do. I was not involved in that part and there was always the question of rather some doubt about whether this was really true or not which was helpful in kind of staving off U.S action.

*Q: The accountability and some of all of that. What about arms to the Middle East?*

PICKERING: We had provided some to Jordan. The Israeli's looked at that very carefully. The Jordanians of course during this period of time had Black September and then they had had at the end of that the Syrian invasion. We had supported them and the Israeli's had supported them making that clear to Syria. We agreed we would send tanks and aircraft but it took a while for that decision to come. But King Hussein had succeeded with the help he got from outside in staving it off.

*Q: With this Black September when the Syrians sort of with an armored division or something of that nature had...*

*This is Tape 4, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

*Q: Tom, had we made any commitment or sub roles type thing saying don't worry about it we'll help, we and the Israeli's will take care of the...*

PICKERING: From where I stood in the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs that was not something that I was necessarily aware of, but I was concerned by foreign military sales and grant assistance at that time. I think we went up the Hill and worked with the bureau on providing the Jordanians militarily equipment. I don't know what was said at an earlier time, I forget when it was, in the late '60s; we had actually had British paratroopers go into Jordan at one point to help them stabilize things. That was before the Palestinian problem really got bad, probably after '67 as I recall.

*Q: We will pick you up next time after November '73 but you knew this before October of '73 so you didn't...*

PICKERING: Oh no, I was executive secretary then I left there in July or June we will pick all that up on that piece.

*Q: Did you have a spy over in the NSC?*

PICKERING: No, we had reasonable relations over there with some of the folks dealing with disarmament and with some of the folks dealing with the Middle East and other things but nobody particularly I think in those days that made a huge difference. I think early on Henry brought some folks over. Larry Eagleburger was, of course, working for him.

*Q: Larry Eagleburger.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Were the Helsinki talks beginning to start while you were there? I forget when they began, sometime...*

PICKERING: They were not something we in Political/Military Affairs were concerned with; it was more EUR (European Bureau). I think it involved RPM (Regional Political Military). There were some conventional force issues even back in the early '60s. There were discussions of notifications of exercises and major troop deployments and that kind of thing in the European East-West context.

*Q: How about I was consul general in Athens in '70-'74, how about did the colonel's regime in Athens trouble you all?*

PICKERING: It did and I think we were all concerned about it. I forget what we actually did with them. Was Henry Tasca there at that time?

*Q: Henry Tasca was there and we were also beginning to home port and resume our homeport ships in Athens, in Piraeus.*

PICKERING: Yes, my sister was living there and so I visited a couple of times when I was in Political/Military Affairs.

*Q: I was wondering whether this was, well what about NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)? Did NATO, I mean, who handled NATO?*

PICKERING: Part PM (Political/Military) and mostly EUR but we spent sometime with them on some of the bigger issues so we got involved in the multi-national force Naval deployment thing.

*Q: The one destroyer I think.*

PICKERING: Yes, but there was talk about war at one point and we got involved in NATO nuclear questions. U.S. weapons hung on NATO aircraft and we looked after the storage sites from the point of view of the political/military activities and local government agreements.

*Q: How about Congress? Did you find yourself having to explain or having problems in Congress?*

PICKERING: I went fairly frequently. John Glenn for example wanted us up for regular consultations although I did that much later when I was in OES (Oceans and Environmental and Scientific Affairs). I did more with the Hill when I came back from Jordan then I did when I was in P/M. I was on the Hill a few times with PM learning a little about how to work on the Hill and how to handle Hill questions. We had a Mansfield Amendment blow up with Dave Abshire running the Congressional Relations. David was exceptional and mobilized a lot of the Deputy Assistant Secretary level people in State to help out when crisis came up on the Hill. It was smart. The Hill generally wanted to talk not to the Congressional relations managers (H) but to those that recommended and help make policy

*Q: You might explain the Mansfield Amendment.*

PICKERING: The Mansfield Amendment was to limit the number of U.S. forces deployed in Europe to NATO and otherwise. In order to keep that from circumscribing our deployments we fought very hard against it. Dave Abshire organized a tremendous effort and he wanted to use a deputy assistant secretaries and equivalents all across the State Department to do a lot of the lobbying. We each got a lot of lobbying tasks -- it was extremely well organized. I did a lot of that partly because these issues were close enough to PMs activities for us to be knowledgeable and to talk about them and to put them in context, but we all worked closely together with EUR as well.

*Q: When you say lobbying, for the uninitiated, what were you doing?*

PICKERING: We were up briefing Congressmen on our position and asking them to vote against the Mansfield Amendment. Easy, in words of one syllable.

*Q: How about the staff?*

PICKERING: We had a lot of contacts with the staff. We would get in to see Congressmen most of the time and talk to them and answer their questions. Some were feisty and totally unconvertible and some were interested and very much sympathetic with what we were doing. Some were there to hear the case and see where they would come out.

*Q: You were there at the time when the Vietnam War was sort of playing itself out. Was that somebody else's problem?*

PICKERING: No, I went two or three times when I was in PM to Vietnam. You just raised some interesting pieces I had forgotten about. I worked closely with Marshall Green and with Bill Sullivan on the Foreign Assistance Program to Cambodia, which was just beginning and Lon Noll had just taken over Sihanouk.

*Q: This was in the spring of '70?*

PICKERING: Yes. We got a retired Army officer to go out and set up the program. Coby Swank had opened the embassy and on this occasion Alec Johnson had asked Ron who he could get to come up to his office and work on the project. Ron said I was working military assistance and knew as much as anybody. So I went up and worked in Alec's conference room and set up that program working with Defense principally and through Al Haig and other folks in the NSC. They were very interested in seeing it get going. And through some folks in Defense who were in high-level positions in the Defense Security Assistance Agency get the program moving. Essentially we went through the whole process of getting a mission out there, and briefing them. They had more to do with State almost than they did with Defense because Defense was a little more reluctant to get involved. We did and we wanted to solidify the position with the folks in Phnom Penn so that in fact the whole country wouldn't go under.

*Q: Was anybody particularly from our military but also from our embassy saying, you know, you aren't going to get very far with trying to arm the Cambodians better or something like that?*

PICKERING: I think almost everybody was prepared to think that we could do better than what had been done. That indeed was probably the case in a sense that we sent trainers to help train new units of the Cambodian army. They set up defenses inside the country to control limited areas of it. We watched what was happening all over Cambodia from up in the northeast all the way to along the Thai border down to the Cardamom Mountains. It was clear that the major government controlled areas were in Phnom Penn and out on the Tonlé Sap up to Angkor and the road to Sihanoukville which they could manage. They couldn't control the border areas, they couldn't control the outer provinces. We had no real idea of full strength of the North Vietnamese army or the VC (Viet Cong) in and around Cambodia and I think as long as we were not interrupting major road communications any more than they were by air in Laos, that did not play a huge role.

*Q: By the time you left in '73 whither Vietnam and how did you feel about it*

PICKERING: I thought by the time I left it was hard to see it being won. I worked on things like the Control Commission after Henry negotiated the agreement. I was given another job by Henry and Alec Johnson, in which was to find 125 F-5 airplanes to make sure that Thieu had an air force in being as we pulled out. It was a very interesting effort. Again I did that almost by myself in Alec's outer office, but we got the first 25 from the U.S. Air Force that had pretty much used them up I think as a kind of aggressor Squadron for training purposes in Nevada...

*Q: Usually over at...*

PICKERING: Out at Nellis, I think and then I had to find the next 100. The next 36 the Shah gave us. He was very magnanimous, it wasn't a hard go. Dick Helms went in to see him, I wrote the instructions. The Shah came back and said he would consider it and two days later he said we can have them, where do you want them delivered and he said the only thing he wanted in return was to be first on the list to get F-4s when they were being made available to foreign governments. We said perfect and he ended up you know, as looking tremendous in the U.S. eyes. The next 64 I got half out of Taiwan and half out of South Korea. The entire aviation part of the project came to be called "enhance plus"; it's been written up. In Taiwan, we ended up giving them the rights to build F-5s and access to the equipment and factory to do so. In Korea, Phil Habib was in Korea, and McConuaghy was in Taipei and they each had tremendous long negotiations. We finally got them -- Phil from Korea -- and we replaced them with a lot of F-4s and a whole lot of other military equipment. The Defense Department guys did "enhance" which was all the ground equipment. So I didn't have to get that and most of that came out of U.S. stocks so we didn't have to go outside to find it.

Good news for everybody is that when Vietnam fell I guess that the North didn't care about those F-5s and just let them rot. But occasionally we in PM got pressed into those kinds of things that came up at a fairly high level, where an administration wanted support on getting some special military equipment to friends for essentially political purposes.

Since I had spent a lot of my time on foreign military grants and sales, I had another interesting experience. For a long time, I was scheduled on a certain date, I think it was in May, to go up to Senate Foreign Relations Committee and testify on the annual bill on foreign military credits. An Air Force general in charge of the Defense Security Assistance Agency was to be my fellow witness. This was on a Monday, and on Saturday U.S. forces went into Cambodia. On Monday, we came before Senator Fulbright and my Air Force colleague had the 'un-wisdom' to appear in uniform, three stars. So I sat next to him and throughout the period Fulbright was in the chair and of course this is the first set of administration witnesses he could get that was in any way relevant to Cambodia. We were asked all kinds of questions about Cambodia about which we knew nearly zero and happily said so which got Fulbright more and more irritated that we weren't being helpful at all. I think that the fact that my colleague wore his uniform and got most of the attention probably saved my backside for a while at least.

*Q: Was there any other sort of major things that you were getting involved with at that time? What about...*

PICKERING: As I said, all the major arms control negotiations we were involved in. I got involved in some of the early looks at chemical and biological warfare, arms control and some study groups that we had.

*Q: What about while you were doing that we had, I think, we had a policy of trying to keep South America, Latin America we will call it, from getting too advanced stuff, which is one...once it is open...?*

PICKERING: I forget...it was more in Carter but I think even at that point the policy still held that we were not going to sell advanced fighter aircraft in Latin America just to keep down feckless arms races there.

*Q: That made very good sense. If everybody had the same kind of planes, if everybody had to get the new kind they just paid a lot more money and...*

PICKERING: A lot more money went down the tubes and they never used them for anything except to fly in air shows.

*Q: Did Cuba play any role?*

PICKERING: At that time, I'm trying to think. Nothing that I recall kind of hits me in the head on Cuba at that time.

*Q: I guess you were there, weren't you, when we made our own into-China?*

PICKERING: Yes, '72 by all means I was. We were all very surprised.

*Q: I was going to say how, I mean, did everybody sit back and say let's reconsider what we are doing or did it make any difference?*

PICKERING: I think we all took a look at it. I think that everybody sort of wanted to keep their powder dry with China. I think it was a little hard to see where this was going to end up in terms of where things were going, but pretty quickly it opened up. I went to China in November of '73 with Henry which we will get to. By then Leonard Woodcock was there as I remember and had opened the mission and we were in Beijing and there was quite a change. We watched the Nixon trip and, of course, the Henry trip. All of us were pretty surprised by it and I think none of us were discouraged. We thought it was a wise move.

*Q: I think it was sort of within the Foreign Service context, I mean, it was about time that we did this...*

PICKERING: This is true. I mean we had been talking in Warsaw for a long time without much being generated in the way of any real progress. We were not out of Vietnam, but on our way?

*Q: Yeah, the final fall \_\_\_\_\_, but we had been pulling our troops out since about '75.*

PICKERING: I guess it was later, you're right, yeah.

*Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop Tom and we'll pick this up next time when you've left PM and you move to the executive secretariat. You were doing that in 1973 to?*

PICKERING: July '73 to probably February '74, a very short period.

*Q: All right. Great.*

*Q: Today is the second of February 2004, Ground Hog Day.*

*Tom, you had a short period with the executive secretariat. How was it at that time? What was its role and how did it operate?*

PICKERING: Well, it was interesting. Let me just say at first a little bit about the kind of background of that.

Sometime along in the fall of '73 it became apparent that Ted Elliott was going to leave as executive secretariat. He had been engaged for I think three or four years in long battles with Henry and the NSC and the NSC staff. Actually, it emerged finally out of all of that that Henry had a lot of respect for Ted and for what Ted was doing and grudgingly at first but then later kind of quite generously mentioned it. I was approached. I had been working in PM. I had done a lot of work with Secretary Rogers on things like the Geneva Protocol on Gas Warfare of 1925 which we prepared him for and had him go up and help get ratified, advice and consented to, by the Senate many years after of course, 1925. That was almost 50 years but we did get it through. I worked with Secretary Rogers a number of other things including foreign assistance and Congressional testimony on those questions, so it became apparent after a while that they wanted me to take the executive secretary job, which I was delighted to do. I had been in PM from '69 until the summer of '73, I was pleased to go on to a new job and anything as prestigious and interesting as the executive secretary was very welcome. I had no inkling that when I started to



work for Bill Rogers he was going to be gone in a month and that Henry was going to come in and we would go through the Middle East war among many other things in that very short period of time. Henry would then ask me to go to Jordan at the beginning of the year.

The executive secretariat when I first came in was pretty much involved in a couple of things: the OPS Center, which was increasingly...

*Q: That's the Operations Center.*

PICKERING: The Operations Center completely pretty much coming into its own, a regular long-term watch beginning to standardize procedures. It had become an alerting center for the Secretary and for the Seventh Floor principals, becoming in effect a standard way of coordinating in the intelligence community on judgments and impressions and opinions about fast-breaking crisis developments and obviously staying in support with the Department's principals, in those days particularly with the secretary and the deputy secretary.

The second piece was the Line in which a group of excellent young officers reviewed paper prepared for the secretary and the seventh floor principals for completeness for obviously ability to hang together in terms of the policy advice and to make sure in fact that the rest of the Department was signed off for clearance. There were I think, in Bill Rogers time very few bypasses of the Line. In Henry's time they began to multiply with great rapidity.

*Q: What do you mean bypass?*

PICKERING: A piece of paper that wasn't vetted through the Line, but got on the secretary's desk anyway. There were a number of ways to do that. One way was obviously to go to one of the secretary's executive assistants and by pass the executive secretariat and another was to come to me as executive secretary and see in fact if would personally put it in, given a) its sensitivity or b) the need to move it in a hurry. This is always dangerous because often these represented a single person's point of view, often an assistant secretary or a bureau point of view, but without in fact all the competing interests brought in. There was a certain value in this in the sense that it tended to rise above the lowest common denominator department opinion so it was always a kind of close call. I wanted to be involved in those even, if they were not clearly vetted by the system and I tried to hold those down to a small minimum.

It was also very clear that the executive secretary in those days did an awful lot of work particularly with Kissinger, that the secretary personally wanted done. Some of it had to do with personnel at very high levels bringing people back to help staff the Department that the secretary wanted and which he used the executive secretary rather than the personnel system at least to talk with the ambassadors overseas. Ted had developed the LIMDIS/EXDIS/NODIS (Limited Distribution/Executive Distribution/No Distribution) channels, I think, during his time and regularized those. We attempted to use those and he had developed several versions of the NODIS Channel on call. One was "Cherokee" which was reserved for the secretary's use. We got a lot of use out of that particular channel as things developed with Kissinger who wanted things particularly close-hold and also who at the same time wanted to be totally in command of what was going on in the Department.

We were at the period where jobs were being filled and he hadn't yet brought back Dean Brown who was coming back from Jordan to be his managerial focus. Joe Sisco was going up to be undersecretary for political affairs, Roy Atherton took over NEA (Near East Asia), and a number of other people around were being shuffled one way or another and Henry was spending, as you remember in those days, half of his time at the NSC and the other half of the time in the Department -- usually mornings at the NSC and afternoons and late evenings in the Department.

It was an interesting organization and it became one of the major ways in which Henry stepped into the Department. I can remember that I heard of Bill Rogers departure just about the time everybody else did. I think he called me in one morning and said that he was about to leave and shortly thereafter it became a public fact and then Henry's announcement by the president proceeded almost on the heels of that if not with it. Then Henry came over and I can remember I had a fascinating opportunity with Ted to see Henry when he called the two of us out to San Clemente in California. We spent a whole afternoon. Ted was about to leave and I was about to take over. I came back with I think a short list of three hundred action items from Henry of every conceivable type. I became in fact the initial liaison between Henry and the Department to get all these things done or to get them underway. It was everything from his security detail to what we were doing about a whole series of foreign policy issues, to funding of his office to everything you could conceivably think of.

Years later on several occasions, Henry was kind enough to say that after he left the Department, he was shown a memo I had prepared after San Clemente eyes only to the regional assistant secretaries. I spoke to them frankly about my assessment of the Department under Henry, what he was expecting and how I thought they should respond. He said that he thought that I was right on in my judgments and made gratifying statements about how and what I had done to help mobilize the department to support him.

*Q: Was his attitude part of, and I don't mean to be facetious but a little bit like Jesus cleaning out the temple, I mean or was he willing to work with the system?*

PICKERING: I think that initially he arrived in the department with a lot of skepticism. He had known some department officers and had respect for them -- the ones particularly who fought with him, I think he had more respect for. So he began immediately to start picking people. He worked very closely with Larry who, in effect...

*Q: You mean Larry Eagleburger.*

PICKERING: Larry Eagleburger who in effect came into his outer office and became his executive assistant again. Working with Larry was easy. He and Larry knew and understood how to moderate Henry and modulate him to the department and vice versa. That became an interesting part of where we were going. He had his mind totally set on having Secret Service provide his security. Regardless of anything we provided him and whatever we did, that was his decision. It didn't sit well obviously with the folks in DS (Diplomatic Security) who thought that they had an inveterate right to do this. We began to see whether we couldn't integrate some DS people into the detail. It was always a hard shot and a difficult approach. He had his own view

about how to conduct foreign travel, not necessarily ours, but we began to blend the two and the first couple of trips were pretty rough in terms of getting things done and getting them right and working them out. I made it a point to go on the first couple of trips, to be sure in fact that the pieces that had to get picked up, and inevitably there had to be, were going to be picked up by me and carried out by the Department as quickly and as rapidly as possible so that the fewest possible stools were overturned.

*Q: Prior to that had the trips with Rogers and other ones been as a real traveling State Department or as I understand it was with Henry?*

PICKERING: It's kind of hard to answer because I came in I think in July at some point and Rogers was gone by the end of August so no trips were taken. I worked with Ted in my breaking on what he did about trips. The Line had well organized preset series of cables and wide number of things that went out, but I don't have a feeling that it was anything like what Henry was doing or where he was taking things. We had a special series set up for when Henry traveled to bring in all the essential information from the Department and from around the world. I can remember on several trips where we were away for more than four or five days, we'd had at least two or three hundred messages in that series, all of high priority all requiring his attention in one way or another, a lot of them extremely sensitive that we moved back and forth. I think it is interesting; it was a very short period but a very intense period.

One of the first things was of course in September to go with him to the UN General Assembly and we spent a lot of time there. It was his first speech. I remember it was only after about the 16<sup>th</sup> draft that Winston Lord who was working on that Henry really began to look at it. But then he began spending a lot of time and effort on getting that speech the way he wanted it. It was amazing to me the degree of focus and attention that he gave for example to important documents like that. He had a broad series of meetings at the UN and they were pretty consistently extremely interesting and high level. He knew everybody and everybody knew him and they all wanted to see him. He represented in that sense not only the president in a very personal way but now the whole structure of the State Department as well as the National Security advisor. He was really in many ways a kind of indispensable man in the diplomacy of the United States at that point.

*Q: Were you feeling the problem that I've heard people refer to and that was that Henry Kissinger would meet with heads of state or something and he would meet them by himself? Then often you would have our ambassador not being aware of all that had happened and having to scurry around to see if he or she could find out what...*

PICKERING: Yes, there was more of that than we were ever bureaucratically comfortable with but it didn't relate to everybody and it didn't relate to every situation and increasingly over a period of time, because then I dealt with him from Jordan, he always had me in the meetings with the president and the King. I always did the memcon (Memorandum of Conversation). He always wanted memcons practically verbatim, but having worked with him before I went to Jordan it was easy for me to do that and I knew pretty much what was on the King's mind. I think as he went along he found some people provided special insights and skills and he used them. Others didn't and sometimes he had the NSC staff do the memo and then it was always a

problem getting the memo out of the NSC staff. And the memo you got you wondered whether it was the whole memo or not. There were all kinds of difficulties and jealousies of that sort. I think that later when he became just the secretary of state and Brent Scowcroft stayed over at the White House things improved greatly.

*Q: Brent Scowcroft?*

PICKERING: Brent Scowcroft, that readjusted itself a little bit. I think that the big events for me in that very short period from August until February were essentially the UN in the middle of which on evening the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, I went back home to Washington. Henry the week before had been seeing intelligence that I hadn't seen or he had a feel for something going on and asked three or four times if I would take a look at and consult with people, which I did immediately over whether there was an increasing possibility that things were going to blow up in the Middle East. Most of the sources we touched were reassuring, including the embassies, the attaches and the intelligence community right up until the end of Friday the 5<sup>th</sup>. He had us regularly pinging away on this particular issue. There may have been things in conversations that I was not aware of that alerted him to it or may have been seeing some intelligence. It was true that we saw a continuing Egyptian buildup and to some extent Syrian but it had all been linked to exercises and I think that until the very end that was considered the major reason and the intelligence community had concluded there was nothing to worry about.

The Israeli's may have begun to worry too, but they too were slow off the mark and I remember on a Friday night the 5<sup>th</sup> of October he was staying for the weekend in New York, there was nothing on that weekend, and I asked to go back because I hadn't been back with my family for a couple of weeks and he said sure. I flew down to Washington and was awakened I think may be about five in the morning by Nick Veliotes who was DCM in Tel Aviv. He said that it had started, that the Egyptians had crossed the Canal and the Israeli's were getting pressure on the Golan from the Syrians and that it didn't look particularly good. He was giving us a head's up and the Israeli's were surprised, they were mobilizing rapidly, it was Yom Kippur and they were in a little bit of difficulty in getting things out. But he thought they would be able to mobilize and that we would be in touch later to talk about what the Israeli's needs would be.

I immediately called Henry, he planned to fly down to Washington, and I went to the Department and put together information packages for him to read when he got off the plane and I met him at Andrews.

That started off that whole period until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, which was the Yom Kippur-Ramadan war. It was a fascinating time and in many ways I had a unique position. Roy Atherton and Joe Sisco and I sat in with Henry in a lot of his daily meetings on the war including a lot of his sessions over at the Department to think through next steps. Hal Saunders joined us from time to time from the NSC. It was very clear immediately that his impressions of what to do were very much based on his vision that this would open the door to a longer term possibility to work on a negotiated settlement of some kind -- a negotiated effort between the parties. It was also clear to him that if that were going to happen then neither side should end up too far ahead of the other. When we were able to bring about a cease-fire it was clear to him that as long as the Israeli's were being pushed very hard they would not agree to a cease-fire, but it was clear to him

as well that when the Israeli's found a way to come back that we had to hold them in order to get the cease-fire when the Arabs were ready. The Soviets were a continuing complicating factor in trying to deal with this set of issues. The Israeli's had been caught short and so the fact we would need a lot of military equipment moving in their direction was one of the first things I worked with him on. Setting up an airlift and getting it moving were not easy and tight control of the timing was hard to manage.

PICKERING: Schlesinger was Secretary of Defense. Henry and Jim had a different view about when material should go and there were some knock down drag outs about that. I think it really wasn't until the next Saturday that stuff really started to move and then it moved it moved with a vengeance. I can remember calling the Portuguese Foreign Minister that Saturday morning and telling him that all these planes were about to land at Lajes...

*Q: In the Azores.*

PICKERING: In the Azores and on early Saturday in the morning the planes were already launched. It had taken I think Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to really get a major part of them going and I said they were on their way. We hoped that the Portuguese would help. They were very unhappy about the late arrival of the news, but happy to have it at least an hour or two before the planes hit them at Lajes.

*Q: Was the feeling that the Soviets were trying to take advantage of the situation in manipulating things or...?*

PICKERING: I think the Soviets played their own game It was very much in the Cold War format and their own game was to say that they would like to see a cease-fire in place. They pushed this because the Egyptians were across the canal and seemingly pushing the Israeli's very hard through to and at the passes in the Sinai and toward the eastern Sinai. We were having nothing of that. We argued for status quo ante in order to keep the equilibrium that Henry wanted. Then when Sharon's forces crossed the canal and surrounded the Egyptian's Third Army at Port Suez in the southern end of the canal, we had to grab tight on the Israelis to hold them in place for a ceasefire.

We had a very interesting evening with dinner with the PRC (People's Republic of China) representative at his offices, they were not yet called an embassy, in Connecticut Avenue on a Friday night the 20th of October. In the meantime, in the morning, President Nixon had gotten a message from Brezhnev asking us to come to Moscow that night to work on a UN Security Council Resolution to end the fighting and bring about the cease-fire. We had about reached the equilibrium that Henry wanted and so before we left for Russia we went to the Chinese. While this was supposed to be a secret trip and wasn't going to stay secret forever, the night that we left Henry told the Chinese representative Han Xu as we left their embassy that they shouldn't be surprised that we were now leaving to go to Moscow.

Throughout the war the interest was high in the military situation as well as in the international diplomacy. The Germans were extremely cooperative in allowing military equipment to move from Germany by train to ports and by sea to Israel and some by air. Most of the airlift flew

through Lajes and I think to some extent Rota or Moran in southern Spain and then went on to Israel and we refueled them as they went in and out. It was not without danger moving stuff in and out, but the Israeli's generally took care of controlling the air pretty well as the process went ahead. The reason for the dinner with the Chinese was that Henry had a later trip planned in November to China

*Q: How would you say relations were during this beginning of the war just prior with Israel? Was Israel sort of saying we can take care of everything and then all of a sudden they couldn't?*

PICKERING: There was only a little bit of that. The war was a surprise in the main. Henry had been in contact off and on as National Security Adviser with the Israeli PM, Golda Meir, but he had also begun to have discussions as the National Security Adviser before he came to State with the Egyptians. He was in the pre-war period also trying to establish his own set of relationships with the Egyptians which helped prepare for what he would be able to do. Prior to that he had left things mainly to Joe Sisco.

*Q: You were mentioning that the relationship was not rosy with the Pentagon, particularly with Schlesinger and Kissinger. What was the sort of Pentagon view of all of this thing?*

PICKERING: Hard to know because I didn't spend a lot of my time on it. My sense was there was concern that he wanted to run the Defense Department aspects of what was going on more than they were happy to have him. So there was a sense of rivalry and there was a sense that military equipment supply was really in their bailiwick to decide. I think there was a sense too that maybe we were rushing too hard, too early and too fast to help the Israeli's out. They didn't share the judgment which we had that the Israeli's were being pressed very hard, had lost a lot and were not well prepared to meet this particular conflict. The military equipment military losses which they were suffering were pretty important as well as the military equipment needs which they suddenly developed once they saw what was coming against them. Defense needed time also to mobilize their support. I think Henry's view was that if we were ever to have significant amount of future influence over the Israeli's, we had to move rapidly to meet these needs at the time they were most in need. It would be vital to rebalance the equilibrium that he saw as the necessary precondition to the kind of cease-fire that we wanted -- a cease-fire that could open the door for a whole series of future which he had very much in mind.

*Q: Was there in a way a sense of almost optimism that the Israeli's had of to get something going in the Middle East at that time, the Israeli's had to be taken down a peg, you know to understand that they were not just, they couldn't do anything they wanted?*

PICKERING: I think the situation was tied up in a lot more complexities than that. The Israeli's of course had had a long standing position that they wanted to negotiate and the Arabs had been pretty resistant to the idea of any negotiations and any meetings with the Israeli's. They wanted us unilaterally to organize the Israeli's. The Israeli's of course occupied the Sinai and the Golan at that time as well as the West Bank and Gaza so they were sitting pretty strongly on top of an equation where it was going to be hard to move them. I think Sadat's view was pretty well established was that he had to make a major move and take the Israel down a peg if he was going to achieve anything further. He persuaded the Syrians to come along. The Israeli's had

underestimated air defense capabilities particularly capabilities of the SA-3 and the SA-6 and Israel unexpectedly lost quite a few aircraft.

*Q: These were Soviet missiles.*

PICKERING: These were Soviet surface-to-air missiles, They lost quite a few aircraft in their efforts to support their forces in the Golan. They also had to give first priority to Sinai. Jordan stayed out until the end when it sent a couple of brigades, armored brigades, up to Syria. Iraq came in through Syria as well. So did the Saudi's, who took a long time to get up there. But the Jordanians did not engage across the river and there were diplomatic efforts to keep them from doing that, to keep them from making yet another of what we considered to be a potentially fatal mistake as they did in '67. They had learned that that was not on, but they did the minimum which was to send forces to Syria. As you know, before that they had had a dust up with the Syrians over Black September over their pushing out the PLO so they were not totally enthusiastic on their side about moving to help Syria. There were times when the Syrians looked like they were going to push down off the Golan and maybe even cross the Jordan River. It didn't eventuate but the Israeli's had a very tough time there as well. The Egyptians had horrendous tank losses in the big battles in the Sinai particularly in the western side but Israel also suffered in the Sinai battles.

*Q: Was Golda Meir the...?*

PICKERING: Golda was prime minister and Abba Eban was the Foreign Minister.

*Q: Did you see Kissinger working with them and how...?*

PICKERING: Yes, I did on a number of occasion. He had Simcha Dinitz, the Israeli Ambassador in Washington around and Simcha was given immediate access with his car to the basement of the State Department and stayed very close to Henry. I didn't sit in on the meetings with Simcha so don't know all of the items that were discussed. The records will obviously show that it was a very important channel for Henry to the Israelis. It was part of the extensive diplomatic effort. Henry also spent a lot of time having messages go out to brief world leaders either in the president's name, or his name to foreign ministers, to keep them informed. He made a sustained effort to try to deal not only with the principal parties but with everyone else that was might become involved. He wanted to shape their attitude toward where the administration wanted to go by making sure that he kept them up in his own way with what was happening. Henry had a kind of strange view that very few people were allowed to work on these messages from the NSC. Joe and Roy to their credit found ways to bring NEA in even if everything had to be signed out by Roy Atherton. But it meant that the bureau was engaged, their capabilities were used, the people who understood the issues became very much a part of the process of the diplomacy early in Henry's time in the Department.

*Q: The Soviets were sort of making, in fact didn't they alert some of the air born divisions?*

PICKERING: This came near the end of the fighting and I want to talk about it because the final phase of this was this trip to Moscow and was especially important. I had been to Moscow once

or twice before. We all went overnight, landed at Copenhagen for fuel and then came into the airport in western Moscow, Vnukovo, which I now know very well from my time there and then we went to a KGB -- (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti -- Soviet Security Agency) provided house, a mansion in Lenin Hills next to the University overlooking the Moscow River and the city of Moscow. The KGB quite liberally allowed us one telephone that we could work internationally and on which we managed to make operate most of the time.

It was a very interesting situation, because Henry's habit with the NSC was to use the aircraft as his communications lifeline even when it was on the ground. But two things happened while we were in Moscow. For some strange unexplained reason the aircraft communications become non-functional. I will leave you to guess what caused it. Secondly, we were beginning to be overwhelmed with outbound traffic we could not send. I told him that I would manage the traffic through the embassy in his discreet channel. He agreed with some reluctance and we began to get the embassy engaged in passing traffic. That was the same weekend that we had the Saturday night massacre over Watergate.

It was also the weekend when King Faisal instituted the oil embargo so we were spending a lot of time catching up. In the meantime, Henry and a small team spent a morning and an afternoon with Brezhnev down at the Kremlin working on a UN Security Council, draft resolution to bring about a ceasefire and provide for future negotiations. Then we had to get it back to John Scaly, our UN representative, and get a Security Council meeting and get it passed. It became resolution 338, along with 242 one of the two foundational resolutions for Middle East peace.

This all went on over a Saturday and I can remember Henry stomping into the one room with a telephone, Larry was talking on the telephone, and Henry shouting, "Larry they're going to give you the Order of Lenin if you stay on that Goddamn telephone." Because of course it was not a secure phone and the Russians already knew everything we were working on.

*Q: A little bit like white noise.*

PICKERING: The Russians started out tough, but they came pretty quickly to the conclusion that if they didn't agree with us, the Egyptian Third Army was going to have to surrender so we had all of the right pressures moving in the right direction. We agreed to a pretty good resolution, that was not contrary to the key elements of the Israeli position. By this time the Israeli's were very nervous about what we were doing and didn't know what was happening. The communications difficulties made it hard for us to get back to Scowcroft or anybody in the U.S. much less the Israeli's about what was going on.

Half way through on Saturday, I think maybe late Saturday afternoon Moscow time either the Israeli's asked or Henry decided, I forget which, that we were going to fly next day to Israel. So overnight with the Air Force crew we had to arrange to fly due south of Moscow and over Turkey and then set up a fighter escort over the Mediterranean to fly into Tel Aviv with the war still going on. The war was still going on as we flew into Tel Aviv and so we flew into Tel Aviv on a Sunday and got there about mid-day. We had meetings in Jerusalem and then left on Sunday night to fly all the way back. As we flew back it became clear that the Israeli's were being tougher on the Third Army and its relief on the movement of food supplies than the Egyptians



liked or that the Russians thought was good. There were some signs at least that the Russians might actually move into the conflict. Later in Washington the level of the U.S. alert was changed. By the next morning things had been pretty well resolved with no Russian further movement

*Q: Were you feeling as you were working on this sort of the ebb and flow of the battle as far as the response, particularly the Israeli because I think if we didn't have much communication with the Egyptians at the time.*

PICKERING: We had some but not as much as we would like. I forget who was the Egyptian ambassador here whether it was Ashraf Ghorbal or somebody else. We were sending messages. Henry had, I don't think met, he may have met some of the senior Egyptians quietly and privately in the period before the war broke out but we had nothing like the relationship with the Egyptians. We had only a tiny interest section in Cairo. Herman Eilts was there, not yet ambassador, with Beth Jones and April Glaspie. They worked the embassy at Cairo and they had to perform under all of these difficult conditions and then it got worse for them because then we started making trips to the region

*Q: Did you find the Israeli response to you was changing as the battlefield changed?*

PICKERING: It did and we were able to reassure them privately, Henry did, about what his objectives were and where he wanted to be. I think that a certain amount of candor and then a certain amount of toughness on those issues with the president backing him up helped to bring them along essentially with where we were going.

*Q: What was the role of the president this time? I mean he was going through the long Watergate trauma but was this pretty much in Henry's lap or...?*

PICKERING: It was pretty heavily in Henry's lap and I don't know, because the relationships with President Nixon all took place over at the White House, to what degree and how extensively he was brought in. I haven't gone back and reviewed Henry's memoirs to basically see. I think that particularly at the time the alert was changed I think he talked to the president. Whether the president actually came to the meeting or not or for all of the meeting I think is still somewhat unclear although apparently he did show up for some of the meeting but it was a cabinet level meeting in the Situation Room in the White House but that was after the UN resolution and after the first cease-fire but at a time when it looked like things were going to break-down in holding the cease-fire, not necessarily an unexpected contingency as when you get into a military conflict like that getting things to stop immediately and then to work out exactly the way you want is never I think something you could count on and it is never easy.

*Q: Did you get any feel, was sort of the Israeli lobby, was all this happening too fast for them to play any role or were the friends of the Israeli Congress and all?*

PICKERING: No, I think they were out and about and around and Henry had them in as well as Arab-Americans He arranged to have the Arab ambassadors in Washington at least on one or two occasions during the war to brief them and tell them where we were going. I think he saw

this as a real opportunity to open up contacts and not put us in a position of being seen as or otherwise playing the role as the Israeli's lawyer on this issue. In fact, he felt very strongly what the Russian objectives seemed to be were that we should take care of the Israel's and they will take care of the Arabs. We'll settle it between us and that was very much their view. At the same time he kept them on board by making it clear that this idea of a Geneva Peace Conference would be something that would eventually be carried out. It took place later in December but it was almost a pure formality. Henry's view was very much that we were the indispensable partner in making peace and making progress on peace in the Middle East. The Russians (Soviets) were not trustworthy and were unlikely to do anything in the long run that we wanted. We had to keep them in a position to stop them from making the problem worse or more difficult. We had particularly to bring Sadat along to the greatest extent that we could since he was a most important player. We had to bring him around to the view that we had something serious to offer in the long term perhaps in reaction to his effort to create this war in the Middle East which we all saw as difficult and dangerous, but which he saw as necessary to make progress.

*Q: Were you seeing this, the Middle East hadn't been your thing particularly at this point but, were you seeing a change in attitude toward Sadat because at one point Sadat was considered to be somewhat of a lightweight and all?*

PICKERING: Sadat was seen by many people in the years before this as unlikely to be effective. I spent a fair amount of time on Middle Eastern issues having to do with arms supply for Jordan and Israel in particular but for other countries. So I got to know about and get some sense as to what was happening. We had the War of Attrition along the canal in the years leading up to this. That was all part of the picture but I think the original view was that Sadat was certainly not going to be a heavy weight, was a short-term transition figure and that somebody else would come along. Instead gradually he gained in stature. His role in setting up the war and launching it was one of the things that helped him gain respect and stature.

He became a much more serious and important player and by early November -- by the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, or 7<sup>th</sup> -we had another trip planned. It was really the post cease-fire kind of engagement trip coupled with the China visit. We went first to Morocco overnight and saw the King, then to Tunisia quickly to see Bourguiba, and then to Cairo for a couple of days where Henry had his really first long private talks with Sadat. He began to sketch out what the future might be like. At that point we worked out the next stages of the trip. They were to send Joe Sisco to Israel via Cyprus to brief Golda Meir. I remember I made a phone call from Egypt to the Ops Center and through Ops Center to Israel with Nick Veliotis to begin to set up the logistics arrangements. We got an Egyptian plane to take him to the airfield I think in Nicosia or Larnaca, and it landed on one side. The embassy had a car to take him to the other side and an Israeli plane to take him to Israel. He later caught up with us a day later in Riyadh by crossing the bridge to Jordan and getting a plane from Jordan down to Riyadh. It was fascinating because we also arranged to fly to Jordan from Cairo directly over Israel -- just flew right across and landed in Jordan and spent a late morning and lunch with King. Hussein. Jerry Bremer and I, Jerry was then working for Henry, were basically caught in the King's secretariat catching up all on all the paperwork that was piling in on us. Henry by then had put together with the Egyptians at least a game plan for the Middle East and Joe was briefing the Israeli's on it and Henry was briefing the King. In fact, the morning before we left Cairo I was summoned unexpectedly to a meeting with Henry and the

Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi in which they outlined the various steps they were going to take. I made the notes, I was just there alone so I had not only to do the MemCon, but get it all packed up and leave, make sure I didn't get left behind in the motorcade.

In Jordan there was a funny incident. Jerry and I were traveling together in one of the Daimler cars from the Royal Palace. We were at the end of the motorcade as probably we were supposed to be. The driver took us the wrong way in the palace down to a gate which was closer to the airport and the airport road, but totally blocked by the crowds waiting to see our motorcade. We quickly got him to turn around and drive like the wind back through the palace. We left by a different gate further from the airport and just managed to catch up with the motorcade as the crowds kind of surged across the street as it passed. Jerry and I had grave fears about what would happen had we gotten left in Jordan.

We flew from Jordan to Riyadh where Henry and the team met King Faisal for several long sessions. I was not in those meetings but read later the memcons. Joe caught up with us by 4 a.m. in the morning. We began to get some indication over the phones that things were falling apart. We awakened Henry at 7:00 and got some more messages out. We left about 8:30 from Riyadh for Tehran where we had lunch with the Shah and the Royal Court. Then we left in the late afternoon for Islamabad where we got in during the early evening. A week before Henry had told us to cancel the folkloric celebration planned by Prime Minister Bhutto. When he arrived Bhutto apparently upbraided Henry in the car and he gave me hell for having cancelled! Being fired by Henry is a real experience, even if it doesn't take! So we all had to go to the dinner and then fell asleep. You can imagine how tired we were and this Pakistani folklore festival went on into the wee hours of the morning.

*Q: I was going to ask, this is so great but you are sort of responsible for putting things together. It sounds like there is no time to sleep.*

PICKERING: Almost none with the message traffic piling in. The various embassies made sure that we got these dossiers of the cables. I would be up at night working to make sure that Henry got a look at the most important ones that he had to respond to. We arranged for Joe and Roy to respond to the other. This was Henry's fashion in travel while at the NSC -- three countries a day, but he didn't have the State Department to worry about. He and his small staff could focus on a single problem at a time. They could leave the rest of the world to the NSC and State to deal with. That wasn't possible now so things were going on all around the world that we had to stay up with.

*Q: The title kept changing but the number two, the deputy secretary of state or who was technically the number two?*

PICKERING: I think John Whitehead was still back in Washington.

*Q: Was it possible, I mean the normal thing would be to say, "This is a big thing I'm going to take care of this, you take care of the rest of it?"*

PICKERING: That didn't occur so straight forwardly. I had a sense that it did for some things. John handled a lot of things but there was still an awful lot piling in and of course Henry had all of the instincts of wanting to be totally in control -- coming over from the White House where he had been totally in control. We got a break the next day because while we got up early in the morning, flew over the Himalayas and over western China to Beijing.

In Beijing it became almost a civilized trip. We had three or four days. Henry insisted we all go sightseeing, which we did. Chinese protocol was exquisitely strong and correct and we got the right rooms and the right places very quickly. We had these three or four days to catch up on the mail and relax. In the meantime, Henry had talks with Zhou En Lai and a long evening session with Mao. Nixon had been there the year before and it was an important opportunity to work the Chinese issues. We went home stopping in Japan, and Korea for briefings and refueling in Alaska.

*Q: To go back to the sort of the initial phase of the war when it was going. Was there the feeling Kissinger kind of instilling in you the idea that this wasn't a crisis, this was an opportunity?*

PICKERING: It was a crisis but we had to find a way forward and he didn't say that in so many words the policies he was pursuing, the doors he was opening up to try to turn it into an opportunity. He saw an eventual military equilibrium as providing him the opportunity for a cease-fire and the cease-fire the opportunity for further discussions to move on to the next steps. In the meantime, Hal Saunders, Bill Quandt and Roy Atherton were beginning to work on what the next steps might look like. As you know, over a period of time those became disengagement. He began that process with travel in December on which Larry Eagleburger went.

I went with him on a trip in January which was the first shuttle. Seeing Sadat was critically important. Sadat had gone to Aswan to relax so we spent a week or so in January moving between Aswan in Egypt and Lod Airport in Israel. In Israel we went to Jerusalem to see if we could convert the cease-fire into something more permanent which we did. It was the famous signing of an agreement of Kilometer 101 on the road between Cairo and Suez. It set up the beginning parameters, which then allowed for disengagement agreements to succeed in a follow on series of negotiated arrangements. Eventually the Israeli's evacuated Sinai..

*Q: Were you getting any feel in dealing both with the Egyptians and the Israeli's, in the first place in the beginning was there a difference in sort of the attitude I rather thought that the Israeli's, for example, particular military people like Sharon and others would be all head up and let's keep going and you know really bring it on.*

PICKERING: Sharon was. Moshe Dayan became the principal interlocker and Dayan had a bigger vision of what could be done. He was among the Israelis the most helpful in beginning to help us shape the outcome. We pushed them to shape what could be done to achieve a disengagement, while addressing the questions they wanted to cover on their side.

We were there in January, and by the end of the January shuttle, the principal development for the Egyptians and for Mrs. Meir was the release of all the Israeli prisoners of war. She had long worried about that. It was a big preoccupation of hers. The night that was finally resolved we

were in Jerusalem and had a fall of two and a half feet of snow. I went with Henry and a couple of others to Mrs. Meir's for breakfast -- in her house. She cooked for us. It was literally a very small, very unprepossessing personal residence, She was clearly overjoyed by the developments. But her big preoccupation was to get the prisoners of war back. They were coming back and we had pretty clear evidence that had already started. The Egyptians had signed up to this arrangement. It was an emotional moment for her. After breakfast we made our way slowly through the snow to the Jerusalem railway station and take the train down the old Turkish railway line to Lod airport because no automobile traffic was passing down the mountain from Jerusalem.

*Q: Who was our ambassador in Tel Aviv?*

PICKERING: Ken Keating, former Senator Ken Keating from New York

*Q: He was fairly old wasn't he?*

PICKERING: He was. He was I think in New York recuperating.

*Q: I mean he really wasn't as vigorous so it was much more Nick Veliotos?*

PICKERING: Nick had to handle the bulk of the work and Nick was on top of it. Nick was very much engaged.

*Q: Did you feel that Henry Kissinger arrived at the State Department and gets the sort of face; do you think he came out of this with a better impression of the State Department? The personnel?*

PICKERING: I think that he was seeing a combination of frustrations and problems build up in the region and around the world and he began to see that there were a number of people at State who could help him. He had then a very limited view of who and what that was. He had a tendency to want to stay in a small circle, not be content with too many folks engaged. He had respect for people like Walt Stoessel with whom he had worked in the past and brought him on as his Deputy Secretary. Art Hummel quickly became very close to him. He knew the region was very competent and capable. He had then almost no time for Africa. It was quite striking because if you look at the last couple of years in the job, he spent a lot of time traveling around Africa and seeing African leaders. That was quite a remarkable transformation.

*Q: How about Latin America?*

PICKERING: A lot more time for that. I mean he was very close to the Mexicans and had in his NSC days other relationships in Latin America. He could call upon Latin American friends at ministerial levels and did so. And of course he had spent some time on a place called Chile.

*Q: Did you get involved with Chile? The Pinochet...*

PICKERING: To the best of my recollection not a lot. Some of that may have been going in; some of that may I think have antedated his coming over to the Department.

*Q: How about on the relations with China? I've interviewed Winston Lord and others and I get the feeling that the people who were on the initial trip there had gotten sort of a proprietary interest in relations with the PRC (People's Republic of China) and were not giving due recognition to our relationship with Taiwan and all that. Did you get any feeling in this at the time?*

PICKERING: Not a lot. China was in the hands of a very small group. Winston was very much engaged and a few others. Art Hummel was just being brought in as the assistant secretary and it was in a kind of in transition at that period. I think that what lead to the Shanghai Communiqué (that had just come about as I can recall during the 1972 Nixon visit to China) and the fact that we had changed our relationship with Taiwan were all clearly evident. Most of us who had watched this question over the years thought that the move to open up with China and begin to develop relations with China was both important and an awful long time in coming. It was fascinating for to me to go to China and see it in November of 1973. We had just opened the interest section in connection with the Nixon visit in '72. We were just beginning to see China. David K Bruce was at the Liaison Office.

*Q: Bruce Fork.*

PICKERING: He was deeply experienced and provided superb leadership. He and his wife Evangeline were both extremely interesting. We went over to the house for dinner and talked with them. We were then a tiny minority among the many diplomats in Beijing but very much looked at as being significant.

Henry said to me early on he wanted us to pay a lot of attention to Chinese protocol. He thought that they really knew how to do things well. He understood that if we could ever approach them in our own management of protocol, we would be making a lot of progress. It was fascinating to watch because the Chinese did do things very well -- they handled these visits very effectively, very efficiently. People got where they had to go and meetings were well organized. They arranged things, but of course they never quite would tell you when you were going to see Chairman Mao until the last minute and then you were rushed over.

*Q: Did you get any feeling that we seemed that our first people who sort of go there were sort of in awe of Chairman Mao when looking at it from some hindsight this guy was a real monster. I mean you know was that...*

PICKERING: There was -- I don't think there was an idolization of Mao -- but I think there was a sense at least that here was this guy who put China together after decades of disintegration, done it around the communist party, exercised almost unlimited sway, at least from what we could see, did it, without as we saw it then, without making a lot of serious mistakes and at the same time was pushing ahead with the development of the country. Don't forget too this was Cultural Revolution- Red Guard time. There was no outward impression of all of that for us to see the in Beijing. And the tension with the Soviet Union did not make the process easier.

The public impression was interesting. There were very few motorized vehicles, almost everybody on bicycles, almost in those days in November 1973 a total uniformity of costume. You found nobody wearing anything of color. The Mao suits at the Great Hall of the People were all the same grey. We went to a performance of one of the revolutionary ballet or operas. Everybody in the room, several hundred obviously waiting for our arrival on the night we flew into town, looked exactly the same. All of us immediately sat down in the second row behind Henry and the lights went out and we fell asleep. It was quite embarrassing when they turned on the lights for the intermission because some of us were not as quick to re-cover as others.

We had fantastic food at the Great Hall of the People and Zhou En Lai personally entertained us. That included toasts drunk in the Chinese liquor called Mao Tai -- a spirit apparently distilled from fermented rice and with its own distinctive and not very appetizing taste. They served rice wine and the food was exquisite and we all appreciated that. The quarters where we stayed -- the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse -- were very comfortable and those kinds of things were well taken care of. Henry had been and still was very impressed with the Chinese -- with Zhou in particular -- with the conversations with Zhou about world events and how Chou saw things. Zhou may have been ailing although he showed no signs of it.

*Q: Did you notice did Kissinger when you were dealing with him in the secretariat, obviously you were finding out you were as a subordinate role making sure things went well. But did you find did he take people aside and start talking about the world view and all or was it did he have time to do this?*

PICKERING: Not a lot. During the occasions when we had a chance to relax he was interesting. But we also aware that we were not entirely alone.

He was also extremely interesting in State Department staff meetings where he often shared his assessments of what was going on and where the world was going. I think you could count on him to have a very sophisticated view of what was happening, a pretty good appreciation of what were the motivating factors. He always set out interesting tie ups of individuals and peoples that hadn't occurred to me immediately and I suppose neither did they to others -- fascinating to listen to him and it still is today.

*Q: I've gotten the impression that Kissinger was in a way very European in his thought process and seeing sort of the United States as at that particular time as really being at a disadvantage that the Soviets were almost, you know, history was on their side or something and he was trying to help cut, doing something about this but there was no way optimistic.*

PICKERING: I don't think so, I mean I was with him a relatively short period of time from August 1973 until February 1974 roughly. I never detected any sense of that on his part. He may have had respect for the power and strength of the Soviets, a sense of concern about the Europeans, particularly the French because the French were often dropping off the wagon to play their own game. He once described them in private as "jackals fighting for crumbs under the table", one of his kind of less complimentary statements about the French. We spent a lot of time talking about Europe. He was receptive to hearing others ideas. I would send him a memo every

once in a while with an idea on what to do and he would pay attention to it. He would write you back, he would give you an answer. He was, in that sense, with all the work that he had to do, most considerate. He was less considerate of staff hours and working arrangements. We all were unhappy because we all had to work weekends sometimes until midnight. He would certainly arrange to have his food sent in, but the rest of us had recourse only to the machines in the State Department and on weekends they were soon emptied and that got a little bit trying.

One of the interesting things was that very early on I found that the Air Force would loan us radios which we could use in our car to connect up to the telephone system. While they were not super secure it was the first opportunity I had to have anything like a mobile telephone in my car. It was enormously valuable going back and forth to work and coordinating admin and logistics things that I hadn't otherwise been able to put together. It gave me almost another extra hour of work time.

*Q: How does this work with the family, this sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Very tough. My wife and the kids went off for vacation in August that we had long planned in the Caribbean. We had hoped to take advantage of the low season fares (and high hurricane possibilities). My wife Alice invited her mother to go along in my place. By December things were pretty unhappy -- in January Henry asked me if I would go to Jordan, which I was absolutely delighted to do. That was a great opportunity for me I had never been an ambassador. Jordan was a fascinating country. I'd already been there on leave once. In fact, in the trip we took in January on the shuttle we ended up after the snowstorm and a visit to Egypt going to Aqaba to see King Hussein. I had the unusual circumstance where Henry brought me into the room and asked in effect for my agrément in my presence, which I don't think it's ever happened before or since. The King was kind enough to agree immediately, although I don't think he had much choice! I wrote my own agrément cable!

*Q: Here he is.*

PICKERING: Here he is(!) and as a matter of fact I met then with Rocky Suddarth who was the political counselor at the embassy. Dean Brown had left to become undersecretary for management and his DCM had been promised by Dean a post in West Africa. That came through so I had recruited Rocky, who was an Arabist, to be my DCM and he stayed with me for the whole of my 4 and half years in Jordan.

*Q: What was your reading that you were getting of Assad?*

PICKERING: Assad, we were getting a reading that he was very difficult to deal with and that he was an interesting man, quite sophisticated in his appreciation of what was happening, extremely interesting to talk to. I never met him, but I went on one trip with Henry to Damascus. He spent a long time with Assad. Assad had the tradition of meeting late at night and kept people up until all hours expecting to be called to a meeting. He was a "bladder tester". You had to be careful what you drank before meeting him.



*Q: What about, did Iraq come in while you were doing this? Was either Iraq or Iran any particular interest?*

PICKERING: Iran was certainly on our scope and we stopped off to see the Shah in this November trip. Iraq was not. The Iraqi's had sent some troops to Syria through Jordan during the fighting. The Jordanians and Syrians were anxious to get them out and they eventually left. Relations between Iraq and Jordan then were strained. They both suffered losses in the war. There was a real lack of coordination by the Syrians of the other country forces who came to their aid. The Israelis targeted all of the Arab troops in the Golan; they got hit pretty hard -- the Jordanians perhaps less so. They had no air cover. They had no artillery coordination, they had no real way of identifying the location of units on their own side. It was pretty much a 'you all come' situation without much coordination or control.

King Hussein told an interesting story about this time. He got word that Idi Amin from Uganda was on his way to see him and see the fighting. The King left town for Aqaba or someplace else. Amin stayed and when the King returned told the King that he had examined all of the war planning by the Jordan Army staff and fully approved -- the King said he told his team in Arabic that they had better take another careful look at their plans!

*Q: I'm talking still about the time when you were, it was the secretary now, did you get any feel for or even prior to the amount the Arabists. Did you feel that this was a special corps that...?*

PICKERING: No, I think that we all knew that the officers who had taken time out to study Arabic would spend their time in the region and brought special knowledge and skills to the case. There was then a very distinct line between people who worked in Israel and people who worked in the Arab world. Nick Veliotis was probably the first cross over. He went from DCM in Israel to ambassador to Jordan as my successor, followed by Dick Viets. I was the first to have been ambassador in an Arab country and then in Israel, but I was not an Arabist. I studied Arabic while I was in Jordan and achieved some minimal proficiency but was not certainly one of the people who had spent the twenty-nine months studying Arabic and getting it really under control. One of the reasons I grabbed Rocky Suddarth was that he had already had language training and a lot of experience in the Arab world and I thought I needed somebody like that in the embassy, obviously to make sure that as I went along I was staying on track.

Actually, Jordan for me was a place where you could use English most places, not absolutely everywhere but sufficiently so that I very rarely had to rely on an interpreter. The bureau was pretty much run by the folks who had been through the language and area study and had served in the region. They were the predominate number of people. On the other hand, both Joe and Roy had a lot of respect for the Israelis and a lot of contacts with them. They had strong friendships there. There was an effort in those days to achieve a kind of balance in what we were doing.

*Q: This is probably a good place to stop. I would like to stop kind of...*

PICKERING: In segments.

*Q: Segments. I think it works better so we will pick this up the next time in what '74?*

PICKERING: Yes

*Q: When you are off to Jordan. You've already mentioned how Henry Kissinger asked you to do it and got the agrément sort of by forcing "du jour" (of the day) by saying "Hey King, how about it?"*

PICKERING: He said he's the person -- this is your ambassador.

*Q: But then we haven't really picked up anything on that so we will start on...*

PICKERING: I'm just trying to think if there are any other pieces left over but if I think of anything else we'll talk about it tomorrow.

*Q: If there are any pieces concerning...*

PICKERING: Pieces to catch up on tomorrow.

*Q: Concerning internal politics in the Department or dealings with Latin America or Asia, Southeast Asia or that...we can pick that up too.*

*Q: This is Tape 5 Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

*Tom, what was it 1974 you were going where? Was this to Jordan, to Jordan as ambassador? Now had you had any experience in Jordan before or in the Middle East?*

PICKERING: Almost none. I had visited Jordan in the summer of 1966 on an R&R leave with my family when I was stationed in Zanzibar. I went specifically to the Middle East because I told my wife we would never be back or probably never be back which shows you how perspicacious I was. I said we should use that opportunity to see it. I was back there again for a few hours with Henry Kissinger right after he visited Egypt for the first time as secretary in early November of 1973 following the end of the Ramadan-Yom Kippur War. We organized that visit so he could go between Cairo and Riyadh and have lunch with King Hussein to get his views on what was an emerging peace process in the Middle East coming out of Kissinger's first set of meetings with Sadat in Cairo. It was an interesting arrangement because I was executive secretary and so I worked on the logistics. The Israelis allowed us to fly directly over Israel between Cairo and Amman -- it may be the first time that a US military transport plane had ever done that to my knowledge. I was there with Jerry Bremer and I remember Jerry or someone and I were the last people to leave the royal palace on the way to the airport. We got loaded into a very grand light brown Daimler of a certain vintage. The Jordanian driver proceeded in the opposite direction from the motorcade to take us out of a back gate of the palace on the way to the airport. When we got out of the gate of course we found the road was blocked by the crowds waiting to wave good-bye to us. So we turned around and raced back through the palace and down the other end of town and out through another gate just as the crowds were beginning to surge across the street in following the receding convoy. We made it to the airplane and nobody ever knew that we had had this hiccup although we were certain, Jerry and I both, that Henry would have certainly left

us there if we not been on time. We were both a little skeptical about what would become of our future careers!

*Q: What was the feeling about when you went there in '74 what was the feeling about Jordan? Jordan had not, Egypt had recognized Israel which was a major step forward, was it an opinion that sort of Jordan "come on fellows get on board or what"?*

PICKERING: I think that there was no Egyptian recognition of Israel. Egypt had agreed to a war end at something called Kilometer 101.

*Q: That's right I was really later.*

PICKERING: So after that you had Camp David which could be seen in the Carter Administration as a quasi recognition followed eventually by the Peace Treaty. The interest in Jordan when I arrived was in getting their own disengagement.

*Q: Well why don't we, I'm not sure if we have, why don't we cover that.*

PICKERING: Anyway I was still executive secretary. There had been a meeting in the Middle East, which I attended in Cairo and just, to describe a portion of that trip to Jordan. I think I may have described the fact that Cairo meeting had set up an arrangement for Joe Sisco, then undersecretary, to go directly to Israel to talk to Mrs. Meir about some of the ideas Henry's had discussed with Sadat -ideas which later led to the disengagement agreement. That began to come apart in Riyadh; we spent the next day going from Riyadh to Teheran for lunch and then to Rawalpindi where we managed to help keep things together, Roy Atherton was also on that trip and was also instrumental in helping to keep things together.

The next trip that Henry took to the region was in December and I stayed home. Larry Eagleburger went on that trip and that trip also went to Syria. We began to propose the thoughts that there be a future agreement in which Henry would endeavor to get the Israeli's to withdraw from the long salient they had punched outward in 1973 from the Golan Heights which they occupied in '67 toward Damascus. And perhaps he could get even a little bit of withdrawal from Golan -- something which Assad made minimal, painful and drawn out. Following that meeting, almost immediately, there was a one-day international peace conference in Geneva. Henry had put it together in part to make sure that the Russians were in the inevitable words of Lyndon Johnson "inside the tent pissing out rather than the other way around". Assad listened to Henry on the subject of attending and allowed Henry to assume Syria would attend, but when Henry asked for confirmation he made clear he would not go to Geneva.

*Q: We are talking about the Soviets in those days?*

PICKERING: Yes and that all took place as foreseen at Geneva, but there was a high level of frustration by most of the parties who didn't see it leading anywhere. They were perfectly right it wasn't leading anywhere. It was seen to be an artifact that had to be implanted on the road in order to satisfy the Soviets, keep them out of the central negotiations and allow the U.S. to assert its leadership to see what we could do with the Israelis and Egyptians. By January, with the help

of Hal Saunders and Bill Quandt, and from Joe and Roy, Henry had teed up a trip which turned out to be a shuttle, to see if we could to put in place the first phase of an arrangement that might involve Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and a more permanent and stable arrangement between Egypt and Israel. You will recall that in the years prior to the '73 War, Israel had occupied the Golan and stayed on the Suez Canal much to the irritation of Egypt and Syria and with a rather negative effect on stability in the region. I went on the shuttle trip. As I recall, we went first to Aswan where Sadat was vacationing in January and then flew back and forth to Israel almost on a daily basis. I think we stayed in the New Cataracts Hotel for a while, but it was barely capable of accommodating us and most of the negotiations took place outside of town at Sadat's villa which was as I remember near the Nile but also partly out in the desert. There we were equipped with one hand crank telephone which could reach Cairo for coordination efforts. Anyway the discussions went on well and we flew back and forth, I suspect, five or six or seven times.

*Q: This is between...?*

PICKERING: Aswan and Lod in Israel. At each point we seemed to get closer to a successful effort. It was more focused on getting the Israeli's out from across the west side of the Canal where Ariel Sharon had led them during the war. They had surrounded the Egyptian Third Army and the port of Suez from the Bitter Lakes on down to the Gulf of Suez. The discussions were eventually successful and we ended up with a final night of the trip in Jerusalem in a huge snowstorm that put down I think easily two feet of snow.

*Q: Dear God.*

PICKERING. We sent Hal and then State Department legal advisor and maybe one or two people off down the road to the airport in an Israeli armored personnel carrier to go to Cyprus to get a flight which took them to Kilometer 101 on the Cairo Suez road with all the documents for a signing.

In the meantime, I and my small staff were busy at work typing up all the documents for the signing from the Israeli side while Henry was briefing folks in Washington and elsewhere on what we had been able to do. We flew then to Luxor in Egypt for some "decompression" and Jordan after having taken the train from Jerusalem down to the airport since the roads weren't open to traffic because of the heavy snow. We had breakfast that morning, three or four of us with Mrs. Meir in her kitchen in Jerusalem. She was happy with the agreement and happy that the war not only was over but that we had achieved what seemed to be a principal objective for her, the release of all the Israeli prisoners of war in exchange for the Egyptians held by the Israelis. She was happy she could tell the families of Israel their people were coming back.

So that, with the Syrian trip to follow raised the prospect on the minds of the Jordanians as to when was it going to be their turn. Their primary interest was focused around the peace process and when would something like the disengagement happen for Jordan. Jordan as you remember had occupied the West Bank in '48 and had been driven off by the Israeli's in '67 when the Jordanians made their own self-admitted serious mistake of supporting Nasser and the Egyptians. Despite Israeli warnings, they opened artillery attacks from the West Bank against Israel proper at the time of the first day of war when the situation was totally unclear, but when the Egyptians

had lost their air force and thus most of their military capability. Nasser was screaming for help and the King was from his perspective he thought deceived into going to war when the Israeli's told him not to. The King was anxious to maintain a position in the Arab world for the future, particularly given his long-term contention with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) over who would negotiate for the West Bank.

*Q: What's his memory.... And that had only been about three years; no Black September hadn't even arrived at that point.*

PICKERING: No Black September was over in '70; this was in '74. He wanted badly to participate in the disengagement process to establish his role. The first thing we looked at with him was this and the first thing he talked to me about was this. I arrived at the end of February and Henry arrived the next day. He received my credentials in the morning and Henry in the afternoon.

*Q: Before we move to that time had you during the shuttle time had it happened that you feel that the Israeli's and the Egyptians were also talking to each other? I mean in some other contacts or not?*

PICKERING: Little evidence of it then. However, prior at Camp David it became clear that they were and we knew about it. They had begun discussing things in Morocco. I should also say that I paid one other visit to Jordan before I arrived there as ambassador that was kind of interesting because at the end of the Egypt-Israel shuttle at the beginning of '74, we went to Aswan or actually we went to Luxor and thanked the Egyptians for their help we had a wonderful dinner with a group of American tourists in one of the Nile Hilton tour boats on the river and the next morning flew off to Aqaba to talk with Hussein

*Q: Would you say he picked you to go, I mean because of feeling he wanted somebody who was familiar with the peace process and where things were going rather than go through the normal ambassadorial selection dance and all that?*

PICKERING: I presume so. He asked me very early on if I was interested and I said yes, very much so. Dean Brown had come out after the war but almost immediately after the war to become undersecretary for M -- management. So the post was empty when Henry said he wanted me to fill it, I said I was very pleased to have been selected.

*Q: When you went out there, in the first place how did we see the King at that time? The King has gone through various permutations from the...?*

PICKERING: Well the King quite wanted to stay out of the Yom-Kippur War. He had prior to that after he attempted to take back parts of his country from the PLO, in Black September, and had been invaded by Syria. The Israeli's had threatened the Syrians and we had supported the Jordanians to the extent that we could with the British. But we weren't able to do a lot in that period of time, but Jordanian army stopped the Syrian tanks and the King survived. Increasingly we felt the King was a voice of moderation even if he was a small voice in the midst of the Arab

world -- one that deserved our support. We continued particularly in the post-Ramadan Yom-Kippur War period to feel that was the case.

*Q: Was there concern that so much rested on one man in a place where people were getting assassinated all over the place?*

PICKERING: Always -- people were being assassinated all over the place following the King's effort to deal with the PLO and Black September. There had been a number of efforts against the King, variously counted up to seventeen, before I got there and so we were concerned obviously about this. He played most significantly a special role in his own country. His security with which we constantly helped him out was effective. The army which was principally composed of recruits in the combat arms from the Bedouins of the East Bank tribes was loyal by tradition and by tribal arrangement. A very large percentage of the population, currently now counted over sixty percent and then certainly in the fifty percent range, were Palestinians, refugees from 1948 and 1967, many of them still lived in refugee camps and were very much under the influence of the PLO until the PLO was thrown out. A small number of Palestinians played roles in the military but generally speaking they were in the technical services, not in command or with combat responsibilities.

*Q: When you went out there what did you feel was your mandate or what were you going to do?*

PICKERING: I thought that there were three or four things that were important. One was obviously to be the eyes and ears on the ground and the voice back in Washington for the Jordanian participation in the peace process. I wanted to see what I could do to make that happen. I was notably unsuccessful. By June, Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, had given a flat no to a withdrawal from an enclave around Jericho -- so that failed. I was interested in reinforcing the security and stability of Jordan and helping them build their economy. We spent a lot of time consulting with the Jordanians on military assistance. The U.S. was providing a combination of military and civilian AID programs both of which were not huge by today's standards, but reasonably large for Jordan. A lot of that was kind of tacked on to the post-war effort to condition the area through these programs to be more amenable to some of the sacrifices they would have to make on the peace front.

*Q: You mentioned the Palestinian refugees and one of these cankers of this whole peace process has been the so-called, I mean I don't know what you want to call them, refugee camps because they have become more than camps. I mean there were several of them, but were any of the other Islamic countries doing anything to make the plight of the Palestinians more comfortable?*

PICKERING: Not in a way that was directly apparent. I maintained contacts with the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) organization set up to deal with the refugees after the '48 War. It was avoided by the Arabs as a conduit for funding because they wanted to end the refugee status by a return across the Jordan river as soon as possible and supporting the UN and their efforts for the refugees was contrary in their view to that objective. We were a major contributor and UNRWA which provided schools, a medical system and a feeding arrangements to Palestinian refugees in Jordan. They were located in what you might call three different general types of environments. One was a series of refugee camps,

principally from '48 but also from '67 which were in the middle of the city of Amman. They originally were on the outskirts, but the city grew to become intertwined with them, They overlooked the center of Amman from some of the hills to the south. They stayed as refugee camps even though people built personal houses for themselves. They had a little water supply and less sewage protection and they were not subject to any building code and they continue to this day. They are on highly valued land areas in Amman and are areas of very dense Palestinian settlement. They are supported generally by UNRWA schools and UNRWA medical facilities and hospitals. Similarly outside of Amman in more rural locations and sometimes completely away from settled areas there were other camps, the largest was the one called Bekaa on the major road between Amman and Jerash in a large agricultural valley. Then you had a large number of Palestinians absorbed into the local cities and towns outside of the camps. They just mixed and moved in and lived interspersed with non-Palestinian Jordanians as part of the local scene. We tried to help the Jordanians assume some of the responsibilities for that extra load.

*Q: When you're dealing with this were there two Jordan's, the refugee as a Palestinian Jordan and the almost the tribal Jordan or not?*

PICKERING: After September '70, when things had been the worst, the King had foreign help and had made some significant progress in trying to fuse the two groups more closely together. However, he could not eliminate the underlining and deeper differences. What became Jordan in the late 1880s under the Ottoman's had very few people, mostly tribal. The only sedentary people lived in the highland belt from about two-thirds of the way down the western end in the mountains up to the Syrian border an area which got most of the rainfall. There had been a steady trickle of people from the 17<sup>th</sup> century coming over from the West Bank. Many trace their lineage back to cities like Hebron or Al-Khalil in Arabic and Nablus and Jerusalem. So it was in a sense an area where there were long ties between the West Bank Palestinians and the East Bank Jordanians. For a long period of time there were very few differences between them. The British mandate attracted more and of course the two great refugees surges in '48 and '67 brought a great deal more.

Under the Ottomans most of the area around Amman and on the desert edge of the mountains was settled by people from the Caucasus. Moved there by the Turks in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the Russian Tsar's capture of their homelands. They were Muslims, mainly Circassians (Cherkas in Arabic) and Chechens (Sheshanis in Arabic who lived in Zarqa and a village in the desert at Azraq). They were renowned fighters and their women were blond and beautiful and many ended up in the Sultan's palace in Istanbul. Queen Alia of Jordan's mother was a Sheshani.

By the time I was there, people identified themselves as Palestinians or East Bankers. They all held Jordanian passports in common. There were some limitations as I said on Palestinians and on their role in the Jordanian government and in the combat arms of the army. I'm sure the Jordanian intelligence serviced (Mukhabarat) and police service which the monarchy saw as mainstays of its stability did not include many if any Palestinians. They monarchy wanted to assure strong loyalties through traditional connections and paid a great deal more attention to East Bank tribes than they did to Palestinian refugee camps. There was never any effort to disown them or publicly to try to separate them. At times the government made efforts to try to

begin to even out the treatment as much as it could and to understand that the future couldn't be half Palestinian and half East Bank -- Jordanians forever divided in a common land.

In the mid -1970s we estimated that there were several hundred thousand at least Palestinian refugees in camps alone and maybe twice that many integrated into society. We thought that a small percentage of those, perhaps less than half, would ever go back under any peace settlement. Their permanent positioning in Jordan was a fact of life that Jordan as hard as it was had to accommodate and take in to account. The government and the regime made major efforts to balance the cabinet, sometimes it would be more East Bank or sometimes less. There were reserved places in the cabinet for minorities like Christians and occasionally they brought women in, but that was very rare in those days. The set up was still very much dominated by the East Bankers who tended to be more favored by the Royal Family and by the government leadership.

*Q: Was there leakage across the border in those days, I mean between the West Bank and the East Bank and people could they...Israeli's of course were occupying but were people kind of moving back and forth?*

PICKERING: People could move back and forth over the one border crossing that was open -- the Allenby Bridge. They had to get permission to do so, but there was a daily flow of traffic as there was a daily flow of goods and commodities coming back and forth. East Jerusalem residents often lost their residence privileges if they left. Often Jordanian fruits and vegetables would go up the hill toward Jerusalem. There were things like building stone; they exported a lot of quarried limestone for building in Jerusalem. There was very little Israeli export coming over because of the boycott, although it was very clear that by the time I was there that one of our AID development projects was significantly impacted by the smuggling of Israeli drip irrigation pipes.

We had agreed to extend the canal system in the Jordan Valley which takes water principally from the Yarmuk, the border river between Jordan and Syria, to feed the irrigated areas of the Jordan valley. This we opened up a lot more agriculture to irrigation and we equipped this for what we thought would be the next stage of development for sprinkler systems. The canal fed water to electric pumps that drove a pressure system with pipes. Almost immediately, the Jordanians began to import clandestinely Israeli developed drip irrigation systems which also used pressure-fed piping arrangements because they were much more efficient in the use of water than sprinklers. Once that got started, Australian and American firms moved in also to sell drip irrigation. They Jordanian farmers also constructed very primitive but very effective plastic covered hot houses to maximize their ability, 1200 feet below sea level, to produce three crops a year of some high value fruits and vegetables which they exported to the Gulf.

*Q: Were there forces of people, political movements who were working on the refugees at that time, essentially keeping them barefoot and pregnant so they would be more malleable for political purposes?*

PICKERING: I don't think so much so. The Palestinians were very much go-ahead and reasonably well educated by UNRWA. Significant numbers of those emerged with education.



UNRWA provided immediate opportunities for that. A lot of the Palestinians won scholarships both in Jordan and overseas. The PLO had never been entirely uprooted among the Palestinians in Jordan although they were carefully monitored by the security service -- the General Intelligence Department (GID) or Mukhabarat. Arafat despite the battling in '70, eventually showed up at Inter-Arab meetings with Hussein. He didn't visit very often and the PLO was proscribed while I was there. It came back into its own after 1974, when the famous Rabat-Arab Summit decisively removed Jordan from responsibility for the West Bank and turned it over to the PLO.

*Q: When you went there do you want to talk about things that you were working and your impression of the King during this time?*

PICKERING: I met with him over four and a half years almost two or three times a week. I quickly came to understand that while no one would call him a deep intellectual, he had an enormous wisdom and what I considered to be very sound and solid information. He knew what was going on around him and in the region. Like all leaders obviously he had particular affinity for promoting, in a reasonable way, where he wanted to go and what he wanted to do. He had numerous advisors whom I got to know -- perhaps the closest when I was there were people like Zaid Rifai the prime minister and Zaid bin Shaker, head of the army, and Adnan Abu Odeh, who was a Palestinian, but close to the King and he listened.

The King's interests were very much in the diplomacy and politics of the region and where the peace process was going and what we intended to do. He was part of the military service in particular the air force because he had earlier learned to fly and still was an avid pilot and flew his own helicopter frequently. He also flew fixed wing aircraft and often took over the controls of the Jordanian airline aircraft when he flew with them. He was known as a good. I have flown with him a number of times in helicopters and aboard airliners. The King's interests were less in economic development; he left that for his youngest brother then Crown Prince Hassan. In between was Prince Mohammed who had I think some perhaps of his father's afflictions and was therefore both ill a lot of the time and much more limited in his interest about governing and had been pretty much excluded from the succession I think very much to his own unhappiness in respect of that. I got to know him and spent a little time with him over that period of time because I felt that it was important we had relationships with everybody who counted or who would count in the country.

In frequent meetings with the King we would discuss many different issues and questions. A good part of my four and a half years was taken up with the King's quest for Hawk Missiles for air defense. He had been very vulnerable to Israeli air attack in '67 and never forgotten it, and was very concerned when the Syrians came over the border that they might use their air against him. He had no way except his small air force to deal with it which was outgunned and out classed by the Syrians. He was also very impressed by the fact that the Syrians had given the Israeli's a very tough time with their Russian acquired air defense missile equipment during the '73 war. So, his primary military priority at that point was a ground-based missile anti air system. As you can imagine this was not something the Israeli's were particularly fond of seeing him acquire although we were able with a lot of work to get that through the many hurdles in the Congress. The U.S. was not prepared to pay for it, so the King, when King Faisal was still alive,

had gotten what he believed was a commitment to pay for a \$300 million ground-based Hawk air defense system from King Faisal. This left us with two huge problems. One was to put together a system, which we could sell to the Congress, which meant selling it to the Israeli's, and secondly, after that getting the Saudi's to deal with the money. This took up a lot of time...

*Q: I can't think of why.*

PICKERING: Early on we were able to tell the Jordanians that we thought, given where they were that they could get an equally good system with 18 fixed ground based sites rather than a mobile one. The Israeli's didn't want mobile sites and those sites were arranged so they provided extremely good cover for the Jordanian principal concern with Syria. Jordan had a great deal more capability against Syria than Israel. So the Saudi's felt they were paying for a system against Israel and the Jordanians knew that their principal problem would be probably from Syria and not from Israel although they could not say so.

*Q: You mean from Syria?*

PICKERING: I'm sorry from Syria, right not Israel. In any event, this went on for quite a while and we worked out almost everything with the Jordanians -- all the details of this system. I suppose by 1975, maybe late '74, this was all getting finalized and I can remember one Friday afternoon for no reason at all and I rarely did this, I went into our little code room just to see how the guys were doing. I guess I had run out of things to do and almost immediately rolling out of the machine came a NODIS cable from Joe Sisco...

*Q: Joe Sisco.*

PICKERING: Yes, saying that much to my irritation and without any prior knowledge they had just finished negotiating a wonderful letter that the secretary was going to send to the Congress on all the restrictions he was going to put on the Jordanian air defense system as the final keystone in getting all of this resolved. As soon as I read it I knew that the King would go ballistic because it put out in public a whole series of things which after at long painful effort, we had negotiated with him in private with no indication that this would be part of the public record. I managed right away, because the King was in Aqaba, to see the prime minister who was Zaid Rifai, that evening and said that we both had a serious problem. We had to think about how to deal with this. He got on the phone to the King and they both said absolutely impossible, this could never happen and they would give up the system before they would ever agree to anything like this even if it totally destroyed their capability of continuing to have the needed air defense. To accept the letter or endorse it which is what we wanted would destroy their capability to govern the country.

I knew this could be a deal breaker, it was one of those clear times when after all the months and months of hard work and negotiation you could see actually something disintegrating right before your eyes. So I asked Rifai to let me work over night and see him again in the morning. He agreed. I went back home and lost a lot of sleep over it but overnight figured out the only way I thought we could ever handle this and phoned the prime minister the next morning, which was a Saturday, and said I thought I had figured out a way out of his problem. He said, "No, it's

your problem, come by and see me". You could sense his lack of receptivity. So I laid out for him what I rarely, if ever before or since, have done with a foreign leader, I said, "Here is a positive approach about how we can disagree in order to get over this particular hurdle." I said, "I will go back to Washington and tell them that you and I have discussed this and that I am recommending this approach," but the exact nature of who was the author of this program was left a little bit alone. The program was essentially that this letter would go through, would be published and they would denounce this letter, they would find every way to criticize it and they would do it for three or four days. But, in doing so they would be very careful not to reject anything that they knew that we knew we had already incorporated in the signed and sealed delivery contract between us which didn't go into the ideas in the letter, even refer to the letter and made no commitments with respect to any of these things. I said that we could do this in part because we had already gotten full agreement about what they were going to do. While this letter made some assertions it didn't ask them to do anything that they weren't going to do anyway. Publicity was the problem we had to get past us. So I said, "We are not going to ask you to sign a new contract or one that's any different nor are we going to ask you to assume any additional obligations, you are just going to have to find a way to get out from under this letter with your own public while in fact we use this letter to justify giving you the missiles on the part of the Congress." Washington agreed to sit still. I suggested Jordan denounce the letter for a few days and then go quiet. It took me over a week to get them to shut up and it took then another week for Joe to get the Congress to calm down. But this essentially is the way in which we solved this problem.

The second problem, which took us another year, was how to get the Saudi's to pay. That was not easy either. The Saudis continued to deny that they would help and claimed the Jordanians had bought a Cadillac system when they had agreed only to consider paying for a Ford. In the end, the Defense Department discovered that the Saudis had put so much money in a deposit account with them that it could be used to pay for the Hawks for Jordan without demanding any further replenishment and the Saudis reluctantly agreed to let that happen.

*Q: To get what?*

PICKERING: The Saudi's to pay for it.

*Q: Oh yeah. Was there that it goes back to World War I, the Hashemite House of Salve dislike of each other?*

PICKERING: Oh, absolutely. You have to remember that in the First World War the British supported the Hashemites who were then and had been for centuries the rulers of Mecca. King Hussein's grandfather Hussein Bin Ali, was the leader and ruler in Mecca, the Sharif, the leader of the Sharifian family. He was the leader with whom Lawrence and the British in the main dealt.

*Q: Let me just stop.*

PICKERING: He was the leader and ruler in Mecca and western Saudi Arabia, the Hejaz. The Hashemites had been there for many, many years, uncomfortable with the Turks and it was the

British who persuaded the Hashemites and the tribal people in the region to conduct guerilla warfare against the Turks and the Turkish railroad working with Lawrence.

*Q: The so-called Arab revolt?*

PICKERING: The so-called Arab revolt. By the end of the First World War, the Hashemites had been denied by the French the rule from Damascus, but got Iraq instead. (Sikes Picot had more than a little to do with this!). One of Hussein bin Ali's younger sons, Abdullah, was rewarded by being asked to occupy a throne as Emir (prince) in Trans-Jordan, which was the eastern part of the Palestine mandate assigned to Britain as a result of Sykes-Picot Agreement. The more conservative Jews felt it was a betrayal of the British commitments to set up a Jewish state in the Palestinian mandate and which the Arabs felt was a betrayal of what they thought was the promise of independent Arab states or state following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. The Palestine Mandate was divided by the British in the early 1920s to accommodate the Hashemites who had been defeated by the Saudis a strong traditional group from the Nejd -- the center and eastern tracts of what is now Saudi Arabia. As a result, the area of Trans-Jordan around Ma'an in the south, which was traditionally a Hashemite influenced area as well as the purely Ottoman controlled areas in the north around Amman and Mafraq and Zarqa were created into the Trans-Jordanian Emirate. While Abdullah was put on the throne in Jordan one of the older sons, Faisal, was put on the throne of Hashemite Iraq. By 1922 the al Sauds in the Nejd, the area east of the Hejaz, which was Hashemite, began their effort to take the whole country. They had also been close to the British in the First World War and had fought against the Rashidis and others in northern Saudi Arabia -- tribes which had maintained closer ties to the Ottoman Turks. So when the war was over the al Sauds just continued their effort to become the principal leaders in the Arabian Peninsula.

In about 1924, the Ikhwan army was used by the al Sauds to consolidate the marches of their kingdom.

A large Saudi force on camelback invaded Jordan and fought a serious battle roughly where the modern Queen Alia Airport at Amman now stands against a major Jordanian tribe. The British provided four RAF biplanes with machine guns to assist and the invading forces were turned back not to return. The RAF was a major influence in the region, regularly flying the mail between Jerusalem and Baghdad. For navigation purposes, the desert tracks in Jordan were identified and marked on the ground with letters spelled out with stones laid out on the desert floor to assist the RAF mail pilots with their navigation. We found them useful for the same purpose while traveling in the desert.

By the early '20s, they had confronted the Hashemites and defeated their army in the Hejaz under Emir Abdullah. The Saudi army called, the Ikhwan al Muslimin, consolidated control over the region. Emir Abdullah and his part of the family established themselves in Jordan. Others went to Turkey, Iraq or the UK and the long Hashemite rule over Mecca gave way to the Saudi rule and of course that put the Hashemites and the Saudis in confrontational posture over a long period of time.

This was followed up in 1924 with an incursion into Jordan by the Ikhwan, the Saudi camel mounted army, which had been used for two and a half years under the leadership of Abdullah Aziz ibn Saud, the scion of the family, to consolidate control over the outer edges of Saudi Arabia. They staked out the new borders of Saudi Arabia by incorporating people and tribes as much as they could. This camel-mounted army of ten-thousand tribesmen was their basic instrument. By 1924, they had come to that northeast corner of Saudi Arabia and invaded Trans-Jordan. In an area where approximately is located the new Amman Queen Alia Airport they confronted a tribal group mainly built around the group called the Beni Sakhr and the Royal Air Force. Its old biplanes flew the mail from Jerusalem to Baghdad often landing on makeshift airports and dry lake beds in the Jordanian desert in times of emergency.

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It doesn't tell you this in the Saudi museums, but this is essentially the story and so that added obviously to the history of tension between the Hashemites and Saudis. The truth was that the border between Jordan and Saudi Arabia was almost been unpopulated and stayed unpopulated. There were a few tribes including one that worked very closely with Lawrence (Howeitah) that crossed over the border and indeed led by the gentleman in the Lawrence of Arabia film played by Anthony Quinn (Auda abu Tayi),

*Q: Of Lawrence of Arabia.*

PICKERING: In the movie Lawrence of Arabia played this leader whose tribal group was located mainly on the Jordanian side and actually settled in southern Jordan. These tensions kept on. The Hashemites were not united enough or strong enough to think about going back into Saudi Arabia. By 1958, the strongest of the Hashemite rulers in terms of strength and power, young Prince Faisal in Baghdad, was killed and his body dragged through the streets of Baghdad in a very bloody military overthrow of the monarchy. The Hashemites in Jordan, with the death of Abdullah by an assassin in the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in 1952, and the brief succession of King Talal and then the succession (as a result of Talal's incapacity) at a very young age I think 17 of King Hussein, were not in a strong position obviously to think about doing anything but preserving what they had.

*Q: Did you sense in the King or his followers a resentment of the Saudi's that this...?*

PICKERING: No, I think that I sensed a feeling that they would do what was necessary in dealing with the Saudi's as brother Arabs to maintain their position in Jordan. The Saudi's could be generous at times although the Hashemites were near the bottom of the list. They also saw the Gulf rulers who were increasingly beneficiaries of royal oil income as important places where trained Jordanians could provide support and security and in business, and they did so. They made a positive effort to go to Qatar where they competed with the Saudi's for influence. The

also worked with the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and Bahrain and to a lesser extent Kuwait which had lots of Palestinians coming in to provide technical support. The Jordanian people export to the Gulf and to Oman was essential. Palestinians went there to work and into business and the East Bank tribal Jordanians into military, police and intelligence work. That worked out quite well even though I think the Saudi's always felt that they should be the center of influence in the Gulf States. Jordan provided a small and not very large counter weight which again put them at odds. Nevertheless, King Hussein took advantage frequently of the opportunities to make the Umrah, the small pilgrimage, to go down and visit even when he wasn't invited. He would then get an invitation to talk and did his best to keep relations open first with King Faisal and then later with King Khalid who succeeded him after King Faisal was killed.

*Q: I remember I was in Tehran in 1959 when King Hussein came to visit there. I must say that looking at the young man and said, "The poor guy he's not going to be around for more than a couple of years." Could fool us...*

PICKERING: Yes, he was twenty-four then. The Jordanians attempted to use their front line state position next to Israel as a way of collecting funds. It was a process in the Arab world particularly after the '73 war where they looked like the Arabs were capable of doing more things militarily as a result of Sadat's efforts to cross the canal and Assad's to push the Israelis off the Golan. The Arabs became more enthusiastic in these pledging conferences, but the general approach was that they would pledge probably two times or three times more than would actually get delivered. Nevertheless, for small poor countries like Jordan with little in the way of natural resources, this Arab largess was extremely important. It was also the time in the aftermath of the Saudi oil embargo and there were tremendous Saudi monetary receipts as a result of the high price of oil before, during and after the war. At that time in the mid-70s we saw a huge import boom in Saudi Arabia, so Jordan became awash in 18-wheelers from Europe bringing everything for the Saudi construction programs. The Saudi ports got hugely backed up and indeed at one point I counted at least sixty ships waiting to unload in Aqaba just to feed the Saudi import boom.

*Q: During the time of negotiations with the air defense was it implicit that the King might say, "Screw you I'll go for the Soviet SCUD (tactical ballistic missiles) system?"*

PICKERING: Very much, that was always hanging over the system, not SCUDs because they're not air defense missiles.

*Q: Not SCUDs but...*

PICKERING: The SA-6s and later the King did buy mobile SA-8s from the Russians to balance off his Hawks because he knew he couldn't get very quickly mobile missiles from us. It didn't seem at that point to be such a large buy that it would upset the Israeli's fantastically.

*Q: Were we being, this would be the foot in the door where we didn't want the, I mean was there a chance that the Soviets might do something?*

PICKERING: We always had argued with the King until you get this system consolidated and set up and paid for it didn't make much sense for him to do other things. In fact, by the end of the time, once this system had been set up and we figured how to get the Saudi's to pay for it, he had begun to buy some mobile SA8s, but not at a point where I think we really considered it a huge, difficult problem. By that time we had the Israeli rejection of any effort to move with the Jordanians in the peace process and the Jordanians had been told by the rest of the Arabs to stay out of the West Bank and the Palestinian question. Between '70 Black September and the Rabat Summit of '74 when they were asked to stay out, Jordan had concocted something called "The United Arab Kingdom Plan" in which the Palestinians would be a separate, independent part of a common monarchy with their own domestic local government. Of course, there was unity of military and security and foreign affairs. So, buying Russian equipment didn't I think cross any red lines of any serious variety. By then the King had become less dependent on us and we had become a great deal less dependent on him to be an essential player in a key part of the peace process.

*Q: By this time...*

PICKERING: By '76, '77, and '78.

*Q: Sadat had gone to the Jerusalem.*

PICKERING: Right.

*Q: Early on did you pick up anything from the King of how he views Sadat? Because Sadat, when he first came in, he was considered somewhat of a lightweight.*

PICKERING: Well that was before I got there. I think Sadat enjoyed a lot of popularity as a result of the '73 war in Jordan and in the Arab world. The King professed to have a lot of respect for him. That faded almost immediately in the summer or autumn of '74 when the King had gone to the Rabat Conference feeling that he had Sadat's support and finding out when he got there he didn't at all. The King felt doubly betrayed because he constantly through the remainder of '74 told us that unless something would happen to put him into a position to be in the peace process he would lose that possibility -- be deprived of any role, He was right. One of the reasons we counted on the King playing a role is that the Israelis clearly would never stomach dealing with the PLO. They wanted Jordan. So the King was a viable interlocutor for the Palestinians over the West Bank and any Israeli withdrawals for the territory. The problem is that the Arabs decide to the contrary in an Arab League Summit meeting in Rabat in 1974. The Israeli's were being resistant to that, as they obviously did not want to face up to their most difficult question, one that still bedevils them today, what to do about the occupied territories. I think the Israelis didn't care much as to whether it was Hussein or X; in the end they weren't going to deal with either.

*Q: Was it still, at least in our minds that the King was a reasonable alternative of somehow or another after a real Israeli withdrawal that we could have a benign Jordanian rule on the West Bank?*

PICKERING: That was very much the thought in '74. Quickly the Arabs took that possibility away. It took us years until the late '80s obviously to then deal with the PLO and with Arafat. Obviously it was an idea that died hard with us as it did with the Israeli's. I spent a fair amount of time with Peres in Israel later on over his effort to try to resuscitate the King's role in the West Bank for that precise reason. I had said earlier that an Israeli who wanted to achieve something knew it was a lot easier to deal with Hussein over the issue than with the Palestinians for a combination of both political, emotional and practical reasons.

*Q: At that time, had Kissinger made a sort of commitment that we will not talk to the PLO and all?*

PICKERING: Oh sure, that had all been there reiterated almost on a liturgical basis.

*Q: For a professional Foreign Service officer dealing with the problem you don't like to get the position when you don't talk to people.*

PICKERING: Frankly, we all felt that. On the other hand, particularly where I was, the history of the PLO was not as a reliable interlocutor rather than as a terrorist group. After all, they had pretty much taken responsibility for Cleo Noel's murder in the basement of the Belgian Embassy in the Khartoum and they had pretty much caused havoc in the Middle East if not destroyed the Hashemites and their role in the East Bank to say nothing of the West Bank in '70. It was hard in those days as it is these days for us to see Arafat as a really viable interlocutor ready to take risks for peace. He was someone who had a remarkable capability to stay alive as a leader under the most difficult of all circumstances. But that didn't include an ability or willingness to take risks in making deals to achieve results in the peace process.

*Q: While you were in Jordan was there any movement toward any effort on the part of the PLO types to get to you?*

PICKERING: Certainly not to me but there were, and the record I think will show ( some of this stayed classified) opportunities to talk to the PLO indirectly at various times and various occasions from the end of the '73 war onward, but in a very deniable way.

*Q: What was your daily work like there in Jordan? Was this a difficult place to talk to people? Were we pushing things they didn't want to here?*

PICKERING: Often we did, and the King was always willing to listen and I was always willing to report back what he had to say. We worked hard to be constructive and to find things that we could work together on to bridge over the gaps. It was a relatively small country and as American ambassador I still couldn't know everybody. You did have a chance to meet most people. There was an intensive social life around a small diplomatic corps and a small group of Jordanian leaders with the American ambassador occupying a really preferred position both in entertaining and being entertained. My wife and I took maximum advantage of that. There were a few among the harder line Palestinians who were hold outs and who wouldn't talk to the U.S. They saw the U.S. as being the Israeli protector par excellence and therefore totally on the wrong side of the equation. Indeed it was tremendous work by Henry Kissinger to build a relationship



with Arabs beginning with the Egyptians. It helped to change a lot of that feeling following the '73 war that we were useless in bringing about an end to the conflict. That was tempered always by their belief that if we only wanted to we could, if we only wanted to we had the unique position of being able to make the Israelis come along. Henry helped to get people to think about it and understand that with the disengagement agreement on Sinai and then subsequently in Golan, if we wanted to we could exercise this positive influence. Arabs would not admit they liked him but would admire what he was trying to do. Some even called him "Hamid Henry Kissinger" to signify their sense of his interest in seeing a solution.

*Q: Well we are going to stop at this point.*

PICKERING: We are mid-way in Jordan.

*Q: Yes we are mid-way in Jordan and we will be continuing. We haven't talked about the change over to the Carter administration and some of the things that came in the latter part of the Jordanian story.*

*Q: Today is the National...*

PICKERING: Actually the Jordanians did very well.

*Q: Today is the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2004. Tom, first when were you ambassador to Jordan? From when to when?*

PICKERING: I arrived there just trying to think to get my thoughts together, in late February of 1974 and I left in mid-July of 1978.

*Q: All right, so we've reached the point, let's pick it up I guess when the Carter administration came in. Did you have any feel at that point? Was anything emanating from Washington that you knew about? Was this going to be a change?*

PICKERING: Well it was an interest in a peace settlement and we all sensed it. I think that the first and most interesting thing was three of us were asked to stay on, quite unusual particularly in the Middle East. I was asked to stay on. I don't remember now whether Sam Lewis was already in Israel and Dick Murphy stayed on in Syria. If it wasn't Sam then somebody was asked to stay on in Egypt and that may have been Herman Eilts but I am not sure. In any event, three of us did stay on to the best of my recollection for another year or two. They said they wanted continuity and they obviously signaled that they were serious about the Middle East and wanted to continue the process that Kissinger and company had got up and got going.

*Q: Was the King or his court, foreign minister and all, one did he get a feel for this new administration?*

PICKERING: I think they did. I think that there was no question at all that whenever there is a change we had gone from Nixon to Ford but Henry had stayed on and at that point they had become somewhat disaffected to say the least with the United States because the United States

had failed to pursue their interest in a Jericho disengagement. They thought some disengagement on the West Bank would be tremendously important to them. It turned out to be right because by the end of 1974 the Arabs had pushed them out in a summit conference in North Africa of any responsibility for getting the West Bank back. So they were interested in where the new administration was, what its views were, where it would come from. Cy Vance was the new secretary. Cy came out fairly early on in the process and began to have some conversations with the King and others about what their interests were. The Jordanians, as I recall and I would have to go back and look at the cables on this, I think pushed very hard for their usual views that they should be part of the process and they should be engaged, but the Arabs had taken them out and so there was not a lot that they had to contribute. They were playing dog in the manger a little bit on this one. Jordan felt that Kissinger had let them down.

*Q: How did you find when Vance came out, he had been around the neighborhood before in various capacities?*

PICKERING: He had a lot of experience and a lot of interest in the subject. I can't remember but I think basically he kept on Roy Atherton at the Department; I have to kind of take on another look at that to make sure that I am right or wrong. He wanted to keep continuity in the process in terms of the people who had been engaged. As a result the administration said they were very much focused on this. The president had made some statements and it increasingly became clear the president himself was very interested in what could be done. So President Carter stimulated this early Vance trip. They were taking a look at what they could do and I think a lot of this then later led up to of course what they did at Camp David. I had left by that time that had happened.

*Q: Did you feel when Vance came out that there was much of a role for Jordan at that time?*

PICKERING: I think that it was becoming clear that the King had not entirely divorced himself in his own mind from the West Bank. He never did, despite the fact that the Arabs had taken it away from him. But he leaned more and more heavily on the United States to get himself back into the center of things by hoping we could actually show that something could be produced. The Jordanians had for a long time hoped for something called the United Arab Kingdom Plan, which was in essence a way of creating a Palestinian State in a separate confederal relationship with Jordan, with the King as a monarch over both of them. It would be in theory kind of British kind of Westminster constitutional monarchy. That never went anywhere because I think everybody saw that as a kind of transparent ploy on the part of the Jordanians to play a heavier role in the Palestinian side of the equation than either the Israeli's or the Palestinians, each for different reasons, were prepared to allow them. The Israeli's in those days were wary about moving on anything on the West Bank, it was too sensitive in domestic political at the time and the Israeli right wing was too attached to it to let it go. They saw very little that they could get in return and that while the Jordanians might well be the appropriate people to make the right deal, they were deeply divided over the idea of any deal. On the Arab side, there was always this long standing conflict between the PLO and the Jordanians about who would be the negotiator and therefore emerge in the cat-bird seat on the Arab side with respect to the West Bank.

*Q: What were you getting from particularly Syria? How were relations with Jordan by this time with Syria?*

PICKERING: Well Syrian relations picked up over a period of time following the 1973 war slowly but they continued to do so. The King paid a lot of attention to Assad and Assad in turn was more open and so the Syrians and the Jordanians went back and forth and they talked about joint projects. They were going to build a dam in the Yarmuk River valley. They talked about coordinating their forces. There were a number of issues that I think Assad woke up and found things that he could use to exercise some influence in Jordan with a kind of friendlier, more gentle approach to the Jordanians rather than the other way around. The Jordanians didn't have a huge amount of leverage on Syria. Later on, the Jordanians shifted their affections a little more to Iraq, particularly during the Iraq-Iran war when Jordan became a major conduit for military supplies, long after I had left, and for Iraqi business. The Syrians then attempted to bring pressure on the Jordanians; they did it through terrorist attacks, through infiltrations, through managing cross border activities. The King in turn had his own method of bringing pressure on the Syrians by supporting the Muslim brotherhood, the Syrian Ikhwan al Muslimin that had ties from Jordan into Syria. I don't know how affective they were but as you remember eventually that lead to a real confrontation in Hama where in fact Assad wiped out physically a large number of people holed up in Hama on one occasion.

I was concerned and talked to the King frequently about what I thought was his over tilt toward the Syrians and his kind of mesmerization with Assad. It was a set of circumstances where I didn't feel there was really any close conjunction of views. As you know, the Syrians had a traditional view that the breakup of the Ottoman Empire should have resulted in something in Arabic called "Bilad al Sham", Greater Syria. Greater Syria always traditionally the hinterland of Damascus, included Jordan. It should have been part of Greater Syria as they saw it, perhaps including parts of what we now like to think about as Palestinian and certainly Lebanon. The Syrians had a very big view of the importance of Damascus and the role that Damascus played and the fact that all Arabs within several hundreds if not a thousand kilometers should be in fact labeled as Syrians under the control of Damascus.

*Q: Was the King making, did he have room to do anything about improving relations with the Arab world, the Egyptians, the Saudi's and others?*

PICKERING: Well it was a checkered course, but the Jordanians had no choice but to do everything they could in their relationships to try to maintain good ones in the Arab world. This was one of the driving factors in the closer relationship to Syria while I was there. Prime Minister Rifai was probably the architect of that, but brought the King along The King was rather sympathetic to the notion that he didn't need more enemies on his border than he already had. So he would worked hard to try and keep the process with Syria going. I think that Sadat and Syria and Egypt were always a great disappointment although it was easier to deal with Sadat than it was with Nasser. There were plenty of Egyptian reservations about Jordan as a tiny kind of insignificant kingdom of a few million people off on the side of the Arab world, with upstarts without much claim to rule either in history or fame or success from their perspective.

But with Saudi Arabia the relationship was traditionally clouded because it was with al Sauds who had replaced from the Nejd the Hashemites from Mecca. The Hashemites of course were the people who participated in Lawrence's organized rebellion against the Turks and expected to

inherit at least the Hejaz -- all of western Saudi Arabia if not more -- and were defeated over the five year period following the First World War by the al Sauds. That estrangement always has meant tension between the Jordanians and the Saudis -- tensions that have never ever been fully one hundred percent repaired. The Jordanians usually went out of their way to be nice to the Saudi's because the Saudi's always represented a source of support, particularly gifts for military equipment and other things. I recounted to you the long history of the Hawk Missile episode and the Saudi's involvement in it.

*Q: Did you feel that as ambassador to Jordan in this period that you were in a small kingdom, which was really kind of insignificant, or did you feel it was a key kingdom? I'm sort of wonder whether King Hussein had such a following in the United States gave them more standing within American circles?*

PICKERING: I think latter. The fact that the King over years developed his personal relationships, was essentially in every sense of the word a moderate, and showed every evidence both publicly and privately of being devoted to finding a peaceful solution stood him in good stead. He knew this and made it his business to be sure that others did. He was to me genuinely committed and took risks for that. He had his own relationships with the Israeli's, semi-clandestine if not completely clandestine, much of this has come out since. He involved himself from time to time in meetings there or in Europe or otherwise with the Israeli leadership. They were meetings that never produced very much but which he continued to keep going. The Jordanians did really attempt to try to stop infiltration going into the West Bank and Israel from Jordan partly because they knew that the Israeli's were fully capable of massive retaliation and in part because they didn't want to encourage the folks in the organizations (PLO and others) in the occupied territories to believe that they could have that kind of an independent military existence. The Jordanians had to contend with a large and growing majority of people of recent Palestinian origin who maybe had closer affinities on the West Bank than they had on the East Bank. All that produced a danger for them so the Jordanians tread their ground very carefully, played their cards very carefully. They had lots and lots of issues put before them. They were certainly not a large robust kingdom, but they got a lot of time and attention from the United States because in fact they were prepared to play on the moderate side. The King, while not a major serious large player in Arab Councils, could always be counted on for counsel and a voice of reason and rationality in the peace process. Therefore we continued to be attached to him and considered him important for that reason alone. So the King punched above his weight and as a result Jordan tended to punch above its weight also.

*Q: Did the new administration, Vance team, during the time you were there lay on any sort of tasks for you to perform?*

PICKERING: I think that overall they came with the idea in mind that they would be on a fact finding mission. They really wanted to find out what was going on and how people in the region saw the peace issue. Around Vance's first or second trip we had a brief meeting of chiefs' of mission in Amman. Actually we got Sam Lewis over from Israel so I guess Sam was in Israel before that. Sam hadn't been over before and I think it was the first time that an American ambassador to Israel had attended one of the chief of mission meetings of other Arab ambassadors in the region. We were able to do that in Jordan with the King's help with no

problem at all. It worked out fairly well. I can tell you that there wasn't a unanimity of view in that group about where to go or what should be done. There was still a lot of the tendency to fight all battles I think not necessarily extremely fruitfully in open meetings and in the cables. People inevitably took on the coloration of their country and recited the histories of past wrongs. Once we got out of that, we started to move forward

*Q: At that time, looking at the Arab world were they trying to deliberately keep the Palestinian cause vis-à-vis Israel in other words for the Palestinians to take over Israel a lie because you think about this if the Arab countries which had money, the ones that did could have made a real investment in Palestine, they could have built that place up or done something?*

PICKERING: Well, I don't think that they were prepared to invest in a Palestine under Israeli occupation.

*Q: I mean the fact that Israel was there?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, I'm sure and it was going to be one hundred percent control of everything that happened. So I think there was a notable reluctance there. No, I think that generally speaking the other Arab leaders tended to favor the Palestinians over the Jordanians. The Palestinians were the people who had a closer relationship to the territory and were the group they would favor in terms of working out any relationship in the future, whether it was to drive Jews out of Israel or alternatively create a separate state for the Palestinians in part of the territory. They vacillated between these two. There was no clear view as to where they ought to go. They had no capacity without our help to do the one and none on their own to do the other. We at the same time were really estranged from the PLO and so we were in a position of talking to other Arabs about this issue with relatively few if any serious contacts with the PLO at any significant level.

*Q: Were you feeling you and your fellow ambassadors feeling a certain sense of frustration of why we couldn't talk to the PLO?*

PICKERING: Less then. We tended to see the PLO a little bit the way folks see al Qaeda now and I think that was not totally objective but that was a little bit of the way in which the things were looked at. So far no one has begun proposing we should have diplomatic talks with al Qaeda about the future. There were differences but in essence because of the PLO role in Sudan and murders of American ambassadors and all they presumed to be doing in Lebanon, no one was advocating that. I think that the sense that we've had from the Jordanians after Black September and from the Israeli's all colored our views about the PLO and what we should be doing...

*Q: The Olympics killings and all that. What was the feeling toward our embassy in Tel Aviv with Sam Lewis and all? Was this a sense of almost them and us or were we all in the same team or not?*

PICKERING: My view was that we were on the same team. It was not my interest to enter into rhetorical fights on the cables over various issues. We did our own reporting and we looked at what they were reporting. Often they were things we didn't have a lot to say about. We were

heavily concerned given the fact that the Jordanians weren't going anywhere in the peace process, about other issues in Jordan and they tended to occupy a lot of time and attention.

*Q: How did you find your staff at this time? Your reporting officers and others, were they good contacts, did you have problems with over identifying with the Jordanian cause with the younger officers and all that?*

PICKERING: No I think not. I think that having been there for four and one-half years I was concerned about over identification because it just happens. I think the King with his popularity in the United States was obviously someone that I felt strongly that the United States should continue to pay attention to and work with. I think that we were disappointed that neither the Israeli's nor the U.S. after that saw the Jordanians as playing a serious role in the peace process. Of course when Camp David came along they were not involved at all except to watch from the sidelines. I was not there, but we were engaged in what was basically the run up to that. We went into a period where we the Carter administration talked about a Geneva conference. They had talked about having the Soviets there. That threw the cat among the pigeons and in Israel to a great extent there was distrust as well as in other places. The Jordanians were not terribly concerned but understood the fact that we had to recoil from that a little bit and it represented a political liability in the United States. So those were the kinds of things that were going on but we were heavily on the periphery of those things rather than in the center.

*Q: Were you picking, you know usually there has been a constant flow of politicians and American Jewish leaders in all of Israel, I mean this is probably one of its major sustaining forces. Was there a spin over into Jordan?*

PICKERING: Yes, increasingly people who went to Israel were coming over to Jordan to look at Jordan and to look at that part of the Arab world. I think there was a reckoning that Jordan was also friendly and that they could come and there would not be discrimination against them.

*Q: Were you able to sort of inculcate in them the feeling that Jordan was our friend and...*

PICKERING: I think we worked at it and the King did a good job too. I can remember that Steve Solarz came over and that he said was his first trip outside of Israel, the U.S. and Canada. I met him at the bridge and took him around. I took him out to see a group of Palestinians, unfortunately I had something else that night so my deputy and somebody else went with him. Steve I think as he later described it to me, he said he only knew his UJA (United Jewish Appeal) speech so he gave it and that produced a kind of fire storm from the Palestinian there. He got plenty of give and take from the Palestinians. Steve was, if anything, a hugely intelligent guy with a real interest in what was going on. He frequently came back because he thought it was a good way, as he always did, in all the places he visited, to keep his ear to ground and to tap the well springs of information...

*Q: This is Tape 6, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

*In the first place, did you get any reflections, I'm thinking of your Foreign Service network and all that perhaps Carter was being a bit naïve about things, I mean, opening to the Soviet Union*

*and the idea that maybe you could do more business with Brezhnev and the idea of having Soviets in on talks on Israel?*

PICKERING: No, I think that we did and I think that it was an interesting approach. We had who had worked for Henry, watched Henry manage the Soviets where he held out the opportunity for conferences but they were I think part of Soviet management, they were not part of deep integration into the efforts to resolve the question. The cold war was lively enough; the differences were serious enough, the zero sum game immediate enough not to want to in fact believe that we could hazard our future in the Middle East with this. Henry's view was that this meant that over a long period of time we had to build strong relations with the Arabs if we were going to prevent the notion that the Soviets constantly paraded in the region more by implication than by explication that they would become the lawyers for the Arabs and we could become the lawyers for the Israeli's and then we could duke it out as to what the settlement would be.

That was, I think, in the essence of what we sensed was the Soviet view. That may have been a very unsophisticated and distrustful view of the Soviets but there was enough evidence around to consider that it wasn't a bad view and that those around who thought of challenging the Soviets to improve their behavior for whatever reasons remains unclear or were not in the ascendancy. When Vance and Carter kind of made what everybody considered was a mistake of going back to Geneva and reinviting the Russians to engage in the process in this distinctly straightforward and overt way were I think pulled back, they helped to pull them back a bit from that approach and certainly the Israeli's objected like mad.

*Q: Were you getting any feelings about by the time you left about Sadat? Was Sadat still considered a second rate...?*

PICKERING: Oh no not at all. I went on Henry's trip while I was still executive secretary before I went to Jordan right after the war in November of 1973 when he first met with Sadat. He came back extremely impressed with Sadat and what Sadat might be able to do in his ability to reach an agreement with Sadat. I think that Sadat went up in folk's estimation when we began to deal with him in the aftermath of the war.

*Q: Did the King see Sadat as a strong leader who was going to make a difference, someone to get close to?*

PICKERING: The King saw Sadat as stronger in Egypt than he had been given credit for when he originally came in as kind of a transitional figure. I think that he and Sadat and the King had differences of view over things some of which Sadat was careful to hide, but the King felt betrayed in 1974, at Rabat, when the Arab League people gathered in the Summit. There was to be an effort to let the King take over responsibility for negotiating, or to ratify the King's responsibility for negotiating for the West Bank. It went entirely the other way. The King told me he had talked to Sadat about it and felt that he had Sadat's support. Sadat turned out to be on the other side of the issue and very much in favor of the Palestinians and the PLO as the people who were going to deal with this. I believe the King had over-estimated perhaps where he was and maybe at the same time underestimated Sadat's long-term influence in the outcome of things in the region. What gradually strengthened Sadat and Assad is that they had gotten together in

the beginning of planning the Ramadan War / Yom Kippur War. They coordinated their efforts in deep secrecy. But, it was a little bit like two scorpions in a bottle; they didn't stay very long wed, and each didn't do precisely what the other expected they would do.

*Q: So much for the United Arab Republic?*

PICKERING: Well that was long dead.

*Q: I know that was long dead. In '78, July of '78, you left.*

PICKERING: I have one interesting experience in New Years of January of '78, the end of '77. In '77, in July, I believe, Cy Vance came out. He told me the president was going to make his rather large trip in and near the region. He was going to Iran and I think India and Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. Cy said to me that the president would like to invite King Hussein to join him in Saudi Arabia. I asked "Well,, where else is he going?" He said, "Iran, India and Nigeria,." I said, "Why don't you give the King a choice because", I said, " His first choice will not be to go to Saudi Arabia or another Arab country", for the reasons we just completed discussing. Cy did give him the choice and the King choose Iran.

The King asked me if I would fly up there with him. I had been invited to attend President Carter's bilateral meeting with him in Tehran. We arrived before New Years Eve. The King went to a small party with President Carter and the Shah in the Palace. I ended up at a party to which I was asked to attend through our Embassy with what was clearly the gilded youth of Iran. It was an interesting contrast, because the city was kind of dark and bleak and smoky and the gilded youth were enjoying themselves, totally disinterested in any foreigners. I had not a very good time and a very early got to bed. I was rather depressed, not just by what I saw, but what I thought was basically the increasing strictness of the class structure -- the wealth and poverty divide because it was so apparent in Tehran. I didn't fly back with the King, he was doing something else and after maybe staying a day or so, I flew back actually by way of Baghdad and then met the King a week later in Amman. I asked him, "What was his impression of things in Iran and the Shah?" He said, "The Shah is out of touch." I said, "That is interesting," what did he mean? He said, "He doesn't know what's going on in his country, he doesn't spend any time trying to find out, he doesn't do what you constantly encourage me to do which is to get in my helicopter or my car and go out to see people in the villages and talk to them or talk to people in the military and in units around the country." The King did a lot of that. He concluded that the Shah was very much out of touch. We all encouraged Hussein to do that, he had been encouraged for a long time to do it, so it wasn't anything new for him. He said the Shah just doesn't know what is happening and of course that is the year when everything fell apart. It was an interesting, early indication that Hussein himself had detected and lamented because he liked the Shah and the Shah was very kind to him. He also basically saw that it was not only part of their lifestyle and what they were doing, but it was part of basically their failure to pay attention to politics and the situation, which did turn around and bite him.

*Q: You in '78 you left.*



PICKERING: I did. Before I left, Alice and I had the pleasure of attending King Hussein's wedding to Lisa Halaby, an American who had been working in Amman for the airline. She was the daughter of Najeed Halaby, an Arab American who ran one of our large airlines -- TWA or PanAm -- and also had run the FAA under President Kennedy I believe. During my stay in Jordan, the King had been married to Queen Alia. She was the daughter of Ahmed Touqan, a Palestinian Jordanian and the wedding had taken place before I arrived. She was killed along with the King's helicopter pilot in a crash in bad weather near Amman. Over time I suppose the King had a chance to meet Lisa. She had graduated from Princeton in city planning. We had seen something of her while we were there and understood fairly late in time the developing relationship with the King. The event took place in July 1978, just before I left. I suppose it marked a fitting end to a stay in Jordan which was perhaps a bit too long for balance and objectivity on my part. Lisa was smart, open attractive and very engaged in Jordan. After the marriage the King asked her to take a Muslim name, Noor -- light, and she became of course a Muslim. Her mother and father had been separated. Her mother was close to Gay Vance with whom my wife had become friendly. Gay and Lisa's mother came and stayed with us for the wedding and we were included in many of the dinners and receptions. Jeb Halaby as he was called, came as well and I had met him over the years and we maintained for quite a while continuing contact.

*Q: Where?*

PICKERING: In the Spring of '78 in May I think I got a cable from Cy. I was looking around for what to do and I knew I wasn't going to stay there forever; I had been there four and a half years. Cy said we would like you to come back and be assistant secretary for Oceans, Environment and Science (OES) and that was such a complete shift I had kind of hoped that I would stay in Middle Eastern Affairs, maybe someone would find a job for me as a deputy assistant secretary something in NEA (Near East Asian Bureau) although nothing had happened to raise that possibility. This came like a bolt from the blue and said in return -- you know is that really not what I want to do and sat and talked with folks. I finally decided that if Cy were asking me I pretty well ought to go along. If that is what he wanted, it was an assistant secretary position, but I knew very little about it.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that four and a half years is a long time to be in Jordan, were you part of the NEA team by this time?*

PICKERING: Probably on the edges but not in. I had not sat down with them and not gone through language school. I had not spent most of my early part of my career in dealing with Middle Eastern issues. I thought I had good relations with them but I didn't really feel that I was a kind of NEA old hand or partner in that sense.

*Q: Well then...*

PICKERING: I had plenty of sand under my fingernails, plenty of grains of sand under my fingernails.

*Q: Well then you hadn't paid your dues?*

PICKERING: Well not in the same sense that they had. I hadn't grown up in the region, been through the language training, had multiple posts and that kind of thing. Actually, I studied Arabic while I was in Jordan and became reasonably proficient at listening to the TV news and reading the front page of the newspaper and asking directions and carrying on social conversations.

I should also say that in Jordan I traveled a tremendous amount in the Arab world. I spent several long trips driving. I drove to Yemen one winter with a crew and back. I drove to Oman another winter, camping out and came back by way of the Persian Gulf coast, stopped in Bahrain and Kuwait and then drove back across the desert -- all not without difficulties. It was tough driving in a lot of these places. I went to visit in northern Saudi Arabia in pursuit of archeological interests and went to a place called Mada'in Salah. It is a kind of another Petra, in central Hejaz north of Medina, which was fascinating. We went camping several times in the mountains in northern Saudi Arabia to a place called Kilwa. It used to be part of Jordan but was area traded off with the Saudis for an enlarged seacoast on the Gulf of Aqaba for Jordan. It was interesting because there were fascinating archeological things to see, everything from late Paleolithic petroglyphs to fairly early Stone Age settlements with plentiful hand axes to a Christian monastery actually in this Jebel Tabaig from the 8<sup>th</sup> century which was datable from Arabic inscriptions on some of the Monk's cells.

*Q: Was it still operational?*

PICKERING: It had been abandoned centuries before, but the remains were clear. There's a stone outcrop that is covered with Byzantine crosses carved in the rock. But it was not operating -- no it hadn't operated I'd say for fourteen hundred years!

*Q: Was that area essentially grass land?*

PICKERING: No, no it was pure desert.

*Q: Has it always been?*

PICKERING: No I think that there was evidence in the Pluvial Period of ten thousand years ago, that there was more life and game from the inscriptions showing such animals carved into the rock outcrops. There had clearly been more people in those areas and the monastery was kept in water at least originally by a dam in what's now a dry lake bed. The dam was clearly part of the water resource -- a water catchers. They were pretty remote areas; of course don't forget that it was when hermit Christian monks in the Egyptian desert were living in cells too in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries living in the middle of nowhere.

*Q: Well, back to a different world. You were assistant secretary for Oceans, Environment and Science. You were there doing that from '78 to...?*

PICKERING: I went there, let me think now, July I left so August of '78; I had to get confirmed and stayed there until February of '81, that was the end of the Carter administration.

*Q: When you went there, again you are the new boy, really the new boy on the block. What sort of scientific, oceanic, environmental background did you have other than being an informed person?*

PICKERING: Practically none. I always liked technical things. I guess when I went to college I had to choose between becoming a mechanical engineer and a liberal arts major. I chose the latter. I've always enjoyed technical stuff and been interested in it. It turned out to be a very interesting job -- much more interesting than I thought. I had kind of become addicted to high policy in the Middle East at that time because that is where I had come from. It was a surprise, unexpected and something of a shock and after I had considered it I said sure I will take it. When I got back, I found that it was a bureau that had lots of problems, that had lots of difficulty in getting its issues considered, that it was even more ramified than I thought. It went from oceans and fisheries affairs including a whole new series of fisheries treaties that Roz Ridgeway had negotiated at a slightly prior epic to science cooperation and well beyond. She was no longer there but as I remember John Negroponte was in charge of that. John stayed for a while and then came back years later and ran the bureau too. John and I overlapped for at least six or eight months and I think he then went off to be ambassador in Honduras at that time but I'm not sure. So he was running oceans and fisheries and it was in very good hands He had an excellent deputy by the name of Morris Busby who had been a Navy Commander. He later integrated into Foreign Service and then later, Buzz as he was called, ran counter terrorism and then went out and became ambassador to Colombia. He was a very capable guy.

We had other areas, one that dealt with all of our international science agreements and treaties. It covered everything from health to research cooperation. It also dealt with environmental questions which have now become the kind of big focus of the bureau, Back then, it was not subliminal but it was not huge. I had in the very controversial and difficult area of population policies and questions a coordinator who had a small office but was attached to me and operated as kind of a deputy assistant secretary in the group that I had. I had a big area in nuclear questions and non-proliferation with two large offices. One that dealt with non-proliferation policies generally and coordinated with ACDA and with two other important players in the building -- Jerry Smith, he used to be head of ACDA. The other was the Under Secretary of Scientific and Technological Affairs, Lucy Wilson Benson, to whom I reported, and her Deputy, Joseph Nye, from Harvard.

*Q: Well, it's one of those hard names.*

PICKERING: Jerry had a small office and he was a special assistant to the secretary and ambassador at large for non-proliferation. The other was with Joseph Nye who worked as a deputy to the undersecretary for science and technology, Lucy Wilson Benson. Joe worked out of her office. David Welch was his special assistant in those days. We had this group of non-proliferators with which I met daily to consider the main problem areas. Pakistan and Iraq were high among them.

I had a second office that dealt with nuclear power questions overseas and how they fit in both into non-proliferation questions and what else we were doing. We were right in the aftermath on

the nuclear side of the late 1970's legislation on non-proliferation after the Indian test. The law was designed to tightened things up. Jessica Tuchman-Mathews was working for the National Security Council staff and played a large role in the effort. Joe Nye had been living in my house as a renter and Ron Spiers lived across the street. So when I came back from Jordan and Ron was out, Joe moved out to Ron Spiers' house. Joe and I carpooled for a year so. Joe and I had a running tutorial in and out of work in which I learned at Joes' knee everything I could learn as rapidly as I could about nuclear reactors and non-proliferation. Joe was a super whiz on all of it. It was tremendously interesting and very helpful to me. Very early on I organized in my office a daily meeting of all the non-proliferators around the building because we had no other way of coordinating the four big players

We also had something else going on in IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) at that time after the Indian test. It was a complete international review of the international fuel cycle to decide whether there were parts of it which should be further limited -- specifically acquisition of highly enriched uranium and the separation of plutonium from the spent reactor fuel in which it was produced. We considered that for both the proliferation risks were too dangerous and hoped to limit enrichment above certain levels and the reprocessing of spent fuel to remove the plutonium. So all of this was another piece of my bailiwick.

What else did I have? Those were the major hunks, a kind of operating part of the bureau, I had what turned out to be five deputies assistant secretaries and then the coordinator for population affairs.

*Q: Did you have a Scion; I mean did you run the science attaché?*

PICKERING: Yes, we had science counselors. I didn't run them but I helped to choose them. They belonged to the regional bureaus, but we had science counselors and science attaches overseas in our Embassies and I took a special interest in their work from an operational point of view.

We had another very interesting arrangement. Shortly after I came in I went over to see the president's science advisor who was Frank Press. I had known a lot about Frank because Frank was a preeminent seismologist who worked on nuclear the test detection and that was one of the early things I did when I worked in ACDA. Frank quickly suggested, much to my surprise, that he had too small a staff to do much internationally, but if I would work with him he would look to me to me and my staff be his kind of foreign affairs arm. So that worked out extremely well -- we helped with trips, worked with him and his staff on policy issues and assisted with other Departments and Agencies.

We did a number of interesting trips for Frank at his suggestion. We worked with him on a number of interesting problems. They included separate missions overseas with the top R&D (research and development) people in the government to talk in places like China, Japan and Africa and Latin America to senior leaders in selected countries about closer R&D cooperation between the United States and their country. Frank was a jewel to work with. This was a tremendously reinforcing thing for me and a very significant part of that fact was that we could reach into the White House for backing and support. They too reached over to us on a lot of

things. They were not particularly interested in nuclear non-proliferation, that followed another track in the NSC. It was interesting in a sense that this job had more associations in the NGO world and with the Congress and others in the government than any I think in the State Department and probably still does.

I dealt with many of the major domestic agencies who pursued R&D and science collaboration overseas in things like what's now become HHS (Health and Human Services) HEW (Health, Education and Welfare). In those days, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was getting up and running and it had a lot of interest overseas. Some of the military services had overseas science activities that they were interested in and we worked with them. We worked with the National Institutes of Health, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) you know it went on and on and on. The Department of Energy, of course they had a lot of work to do with us in non-proliferation but they also had other interests. John Deutch was under secretary there out of Boston and MIT worked closely with Joe Nye. Joe introduced me to John and we became close collaborators on a very interesting effort that we pursued later in my OES time. John went over and actually bought an interest in a French program for enrichment of uranium through chemical processes. We didn't know precisely what the French were doing. We had some ideas, but we paid them a consulting fee in fact to tell us what they were doing in this area to get a better idea and to see whether in fact it would have made any sense for us or others to use it. In the end it didn't. John was a renowned physical chemist and immediately understood what the French had developed. We need to assess the process for proliferation resistance should others seek to develop it to produce a weapon.

*Q: Well it sounds like there was a tremendous breath also one can describe it as almost a hodgepodge of things...*

PICKERING: Oh, cats and dogs.

*Q: Thrown together.*

PICKERING: Yes actually it arose because at one point after I had left the department to go to Jordan, Henry asked the usual question, "Why do I have all of these special assistants I never see". He said let's kind of take a look at reorganizing and I think that Larry who was there and maybe George Springsteen and a couple other people said, "Well, we have a common thread of science and scientific like work, why don't we sweep these all into a bureau and they set up a bureau. They had a very good guy who was not a career foreign service officer but had been in the Department long enough and had been an expert in this area for a significant amount of time to become the first leader of this new bureau. It became OES

It was a bit like PM, how PM was organized in the period before that in the early Nixon period when a bunch of folks working on arms control and related issues were pulled into PM and I went over there fairly quickly and worked for Ron Spiers who was the second director of PM. But the same idea that we had a bunch of people floating around the Department who did work which was similar and that made sense not to have them as special assistants to the secretary any longer to kind of tax his staff and be loose kidneys and not function in a coordinated way, but to coordinate those into a new bureau for creative purposes. OES in those days was fairly large, I

think we had 185 or 200 people on the Washington end and almost nobody overseas to speak of except the science counselors and attaches. We did lots of interesting programs all over the place and as a result we had huge range of contacts with the executive branch, departments and agencies. We managed a lot of those. We actually looked over how HHS and its cooperative agreements was working with other organizations in foreign countries and international organizations. We had a wealth of international organizations of a scientific character that we were working with -- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization) was one. I think it was actually before we pulled out of UNESCO but I'm not sure. We may have actually pulled out by then.

Then we had a huge range of contacts on the Hill. The Whale Lobby was one of my favorites and I was not one of theirs but it was interesting. We had all the animal protection treaties. The CITES treaty covered in part the non-importation of ivory. There was just a huge panoply of very interesting things going on all the time.

One of the most interesting experiences I had was that I think my second year my budget was cut fifty percent by a disappointed Congressman who worked his vengeance on me because I wouldn't dismiss someone in order to hire one of his diving buddies to be a deputy assistant secretary in my bureau to deal with oceans and fish. At least that was in my view, the reason. This came to us out of the blue. The Department, Congressional Relations, didn't pay much attention to it. I had a couple of very good special assistants who watched the Hill for me and they discovered this very quickly. I was then left on my own by the Department to go out to defend and try to restore on the floor the 50% cut made in committee. My folks who had all of these contacts on the Hill and around town did an absolutely fantastic job. We just lobbied the Hill tremendously while the State Department hung back in Congressional Relations. I was trying to build up my bureau and the State Department in the eyes of this big community to convince them that we could work their issues and be successful. I had a sense of responsibility with respect to them. They all suddenly turned around and saw this cut coming. They understood they were going to lose much of the relationship they had in the State Department through OES and any influence in State along with it. So those outside people also worked hard to save us. We actually saved the budget in a floor debate which went on for a couple of hours. We ended up with something like 160 votes in the floor of the House in favor and 80 against restoring the OES budget.

*Q: I was going to say it sounds like you were...*

PICKERING: Frankly, as an assistant secretary I did more on my own. I saw the secretary occasionally but very rarely. I had said to Cy Vance when I started, that "I will not measure my success by the number of times I parade into your office with a problem." I asked him to "Let me go out there and see what I can do with this. If I have something really big, I'll come back." Lucy Wilson Benson was the undersecretary and she took a lot of interest in OES, was very helpful, was extremely supportive and weighed in from time to time. Lucy can be quite formidable if you know her, I became a friend and worked very closely with her and we got a lot of things done. It was interesting in part because almost all the prior leaders in the bureau had been political appointees. One of them was an ex-Congresswoman who is very, very pleasant and very capable, but had less interest in the Department and less knowledge of how to make the

Department work in your favor -- how to deal with the foreign policy establishment on those terms. Coming out of the Foreign Service and having had a lot of that experience with the Department, having even been for a short period of time executive secretary, it was for me comparatively easy to kind of locate myself in the bureau. I had to decide what to do to pull the organization up by its boot straps, to populate it with good people which was harder, but we did and to put it into working in the government on these issues. Those were all the sorts of objectives that I wanted to achieve while I was in OES.

*Q: I would think that it would be hard to get a Foreign Service officer say come on over into oceans. They want to get into...*

PICKERING: They want to go back to their regional bureau because the regional bureaus are the ones that control the overseas assignments and have the funding for the Embassies. They are the bread and butter to the Foreign Service. We all understood that but nevertheless we were able to attract good people. I had the particularly good fortune of going out and recruiting a tremendously good guy both analytically and managerially who was a civil servant who had worked in the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs with me, Leslie Brown to be my principal deputy. Les was a very calm head and a very bright and capable guy who knew his way around the Department after years of experience. I brought him in as my principal deputy assistant secretary to help me manage the bureau. He had a lot of arms control experience, a lot of technical background, a lot of competence and was just kind of the right person to be the deputy in the bureau. We had an excellent person in the non-proliferation area Lou Nosenzo. Mike Guhan who had worked for Henry was one of my office directors in non-proliferation. Similarly, John Boright also covered the nuclear power office and has now been for years at the National Academy Science. Most of these fellows I thought were good and had worked in the bureau for a long time. They just needed some support and they needed some backing in moving things ahead and so we were able to do that.

*Q: I would have thought that you talked about getting non-proliferation and all this and nuclear matters would fall more into ACDA or arms control.*

PICKERING: Well ACDA was there and of course the State Department never relinquished its own individual interest in arms control. So even when ACDA was set up, the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs remained the principal adviser in the Department to the secretary on disarmament and arms control. There were three of us in the Department, Joe Nye, Jerry Smith and I (as well as ACDA) who were all working with the secretary on non-proliferation. I tended to try to pick up what were the operational questions, what was happening with respect to Pakistan today and what could we do to block a shipment we knew was going to Pakistan that had proliferation significance. We looked what governments did we have to work with to make that happen. I had the NEA team which covered Pakistan in my office every day, people like Howard Schaefer and so on, excellent people. Bob Gallucci was covering all of this in INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research). He was our daily source of intelligence briefings. Bob was first rate. This small group sat in my office and did an hour on what were our operational problems and how do we deal with them. Then we spent a little time on the longer-range policy issues. Joe Nye and Jerry worked on the fuel cycle. Jerry worked extensively on high-level negotiations with our allies over non-proliferation issues and where we were going.

Lou Nosenzo was my nuclear deputy as I had noted. Lou and I worked on a major problem coming out of the look at the nuclear fuel cycle. There was a tremendous amount of objection to the notion that countries should have the capability to reprocess plutonium. Japan was way down the road, the British and French had already done it, but they were nuclear powers so under the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) they could claim some latitude for their special status. Lou and I spent about a year with the Japanese figuring out precisely how we could work out a kind of satisfactory position for the Japanese and for the United States on this issue. The deal was finally worked was later carried over into the Reagan administration after we left. But we put a lot of the building blocks in place as to how to do that. It was a highly sensitive issue because on the one end folks in the White House who were very strongly anti-proliferation, essentially for political and security reasons didn't want to leave any leeway to separate plutonium for non-nuclear states like Japan. The Japanese were deeply dug in on doing that. It was very hard to deal with the Japanese. They were too big to muscle and too important not to take into account and too difficult not to try to bring into the tent. So we had a very interesting long-term dialogue with them about what kinds of things that they would do in this area, what kinds of things they wouldn't do and we worked out something that I think later became a fairly satisfactory settlement and didn't lead others to try to replicate that status.

*Q: Were the Japanese I would think they would be under tremendous constraints from their own people, I mean...*

PICKERING: Interestingly enough, because they wanted to develop nuclear power which became very popular in Japan, they wanted to have a full fuel cycle and they wanted to be independent. They wanted to have in effect all of the things that were necessary and even possible without discrimination. They were fascinated with breeder reactors turning out plutonium for power reactor fuel. They had a lot of plutonium coming out of the spent fuel from their own civil reactors. The problem is all that plutonium was right there and could be used to make a nuclear weapon. For a long time people thought that reactor grade plutonium that coming out of the spent fuel from the civil power program wasn't good enough for weapons. However, we all knew for a fact that it was. We had tested it. The Japanese separated out a lot of plutonium, mainly in the UK where in the main it stayed. They have had trouble bringing on line a breeder reactor that works successfully as well as developing and managing the chemical technology to separate plutonium from spent fuel.

*Q: What about in the fuel cycle did you reach a point where you just have highly radioactive stuff that couldn't really be used but had to be disposed of?*

PICKERING: Oh, there are huge volumes of much that comes out of civil power production is highly radiated, stored in pools either next to the reactors or now in other storage sites. Just this year (2004), we finally qualified the tunnel at Yucca Flats in Nevada for permanent storage of nuclear fuel. (2015 and it is still not in use, blocked politically by the Congressional Nevada Delegation). But if it isn't going to stay there for 300 or 400 thousand years with no contamination in absolute certainty of no such problem, the environmental community gets very disturbed. Of course environmental community on the one side was very concerned about



nuclear power anyway. I was sitting in John Deutch's office in the Department of Energy the day he got a call saying they had a real problem at Three Mile Island (TMI).

*Q: I would image the Three Mile Island whether it was a nuclear leakage must have...it really changed our whole attitude didn't it?*

PPICKERING: It was one of the many things they helped change views on nuclear power. Chernobyl certainly did. People got increasingly concerned by the problem of reactors getting loose and acting dangerously. Knock on wood, we haven't had it outside of TMI. We still run a lot of civil reactors, but TMI has more or less put the kibosh on the development of further new nuclear power reactors in the United States. We haven't developed any of those since the '70s, built any new ones. (2015 some few are under construction now). We put a lot of constraints on for example, breeder reactors, which would produce more plutonium than they would burn up mainly because of the proliferation danger. Nobody, as well, including us and the French has been able to perfect the technology enough to make it an on-going, workable, economically viable proposition.

*Q: Did Israel admit its nuclear developments? Raise anything with your office during this time?*

PICKERING: Yes sure. By then we had -- details are highly classified -- but we had all had begun to assume that Israel was de facto at least a member of the nuclear club.

*Q: Let's talk about oceans. What were you doing ocean wise?*

PICKERING: Well we were doing a lot of things. We had some fishery treaties to negotiate, we had some boundary treaties which we got involved with because they were seaward extensions, the Alaska-Yukon Boundary, the Gulf of Maine is a long-standing issue which then was being negotiated. Boundaries affect fishery resources. because we end up fishing in each other's waters. In OES, we were very much engaged in the Law of Sea which was about to establish a 200-mile economic zone. We had negotiated arrangements for Atlantic and Pacific salmon, which on the high seas protected the catch against over fishing with the major fishery states of the world. We also had a huge problem about people taking whales for "research" or subsistence for native peoples. There were continuing efforts -- we had I think just about succeeded in agreeing on a whale convention, except for a little Aboriginal whaling, in getting most of the whaling stopped around the world. The Japanese were still taking some and still do I guess as part of "scientific experiments" even though they love to eat the meat.

We had a lot of fisheries conservation resources issues that had to do with the economic viability of our east and west coast fishing fleets. We had a Southern Pacific tuna convention so we could protect our rights to fish in the South Pacific and protect the catch from over fishing. We had a lot of difficult issues with Mexico over fisheries issues in the Pacific coast in particular, less in the Gulf. Those all had to be worked out and regulated. We did pay a lot of attention particularly to the fisheries side of the Law of the Sea and we followed what was going on in the Law of the Sea. Although we were not major participators some of my team actually worked with Elliott Richardson who was the negotiator at that time on various sub-committees dealing with specific

parts, especially fishing. I would go out and visit him every once in a while and see where he was going and see where the process was taking us.

*Q: Were the tuna wars still going on down in Ecuador and Peru and all?*

PICKERING: Some of that had been handled by these bigger agreements in the South Pacific zone.

*Q: On these agreements, our fishing people who had very strong feelings about this, it is their livelihood but sources were dwindling and technology was getting to wake up to the bounty of the ocean. You must have been under conflicting pressures weren't you?*

PICKERING: We were. We worked with the National Maritime Fishing folks in Commerce and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) who were very close to the industry -- with the fishing councils in New England and the Pacific. Happily, most of the key agreements had already been put in place, so we were dealing with supplemental agreements and changes rather than major questions. The big battles had been fought.

There was a constant effort for us to pay attention to what that the US fisherman wanted and felt they needed. On several occasions Senator Warren Magnuson from Washington held hearing in which I testified on Northwest Pacific fisheries issues. On Alaska fisheries issues, Senator Stephens was very interested as he still is on those kinds of issues. There was a lot of field contact and that was just one of the numerous constituencies that we had to deal with. We were never able to satisfy everybody all of the time. We put a lot of pressure on foreign countries to join us in what were essentially conservation oriented mechanisms which tended to favor our larger fishing fleet. But our fishing fleet had trouble competing with Japan and with Russia and others. The Soviets were doing a lot of deep-sea fishing in the polar areas. The Japanese were around all over, they were global fishermen.

*Q: Ours were more individual type fishermen weren't they than rather than these big factory ships?*

PICKERING: Closer in shore, yes. We were short-term fishermen without the benefit of logistical establishments, processing boats, far off shore to handle a catch and things like that.

*Q: How about Canada or did you get involved? Who handles the fish in Canada?*

PICKERING: Canada had their own ministry or certainly one of the Canadian Ministries focus in on the issue. Our negotiators would see them frequently. They were continuing to raise the important issues in U.S.-Canada relations and as I said particularly the Gulf of Maine boundary, which hadn't been finally settled yet. It was a major outstanding issue that had been going on for years. It has been now I think, happily resolved.

*Q: Well, I think John has gotten involved with this.*

PICKERING: Daniel Webster certainly did but access to the George's bank and things of that sort were all very important to us.

*Q: In the first place, I must say did you ever have staff meetings that would sound like everybody was talking a different language practically?*

PICKERING: We had a pretty good group. We had the five or so persons who were deputy assistant secretaries and a couple of other people in my office. We would meet every day. I thought this was a big enough bureau and ramified enough and things were moving enough that a daily staff meeting was pretty essential. So the first hour of the day they all came in to my office and we would sit down and go over what issues they were dealing with, where they were going. I had to do a lot of delegation. I had to trust the people to do what was needed. I basically said call when you need me and when something comes up keep me informed. I will tell you when I am interested in something. They were pretty good about figuring out where to pick up and why and how to move the questions. They had a lot of experience. A lot of it was interagency work. I had more to do with assistant secretaries and other departments than I had in State Department. We had things in the State Department; we worked closely with Dean Hinton who was the Economic and Business Bureau (EB). Dean was great to work with and was deep into the background of many of the issues.

One of the interesting things we did in the environmental area was to become co-collaborators with the Council on Environmental Quality at the White House on producing something called Global 2000. It was basically a look ahead, this was of course back in 1978-79, at the question of population growth and resources, and how that would impact the world in 2000, especially in terms of environmental pressure. What we did was we used the Council on Environmental Qualities backing to recruit contributors all over the government. For example, the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) took a look at what was happening to forest cover in the world mainly through things like land sat photography. It was interesting because out of that early look, even before I got to the bureau, they had discovered that tropical forests were disappearing at a rate that was absolutely breathtaking. That led to our putting together and actually negotiating an international tropical forest protection convention well ahead of producing the report.

The report turned out to attract a lot of attention. It was ground breaking -- using essentially in house government research capabilities to look so far ahead and at such a broad sweep of issues. When we published I became a joint signatory. The environmental focus caused dyspepsia on the other side of the aisle. However much of the factual information was valuable. We often discussed the question of whether a regular effort like this would be useful and if so how often. I thought it would. A number of other countries were very interested in the report, looked at and came to a similar conclusion.

The report, to my view unfortunately, became a centerpiece of President Carter's campaign for re-election. That politicized an otherwise careful effort to keep it out of politics. It was never revived by follow-on administrations. Although beginning at the end of this century, the CIA has taken a look at the world on a regular basis some five years ahead. A lot of that looks at political trends. But some of it also reviews resources and demography and environmental impacts.

We felt we were breaking new ground and putting in place material which could be useful in making policy judgments for the time ahead.

*Q: I would imagine Brazil would have been at the top of this?*

PICKERING: Absolutely, on tropical forests.

*Q: How did this work? Did your office deal directly with Brazil or did it go through the ARA?*

PICKERING: We kept ARA ( the Latin American region) involved and up to date and worked with our embassy in Brazil and set up negotiations with the Brazilians, We also began later to look at the ozone and ozone depletion.

*Q: Almost theological, it does get theological.*

PICKERING: Well, population was a very difficult issue. The Carter administration was obviously more interested in population programs than their successors. It was therefore supportive of U.S. government's work in AID, which had big programs. State had no programs. We had something called the Coordinator for Population Affairs who played a major role in U.S. government policy. We had lots of pressures from the Hill pro and con activist efforts to limit population growth. There was obviously interest in the abortion issue, domestically and internationally and in what role we should play in that area. We attempted to create a policy that would be generally supportive working with countries overseas that wanted to adopt contraception to deal with demographic problems, deal with growth rates. We did not try to cut ourselves off from organizations either internationally or privately that supported governments that wanted to control births. That later became a nexus of contention in the succeeding Reagan administration. We generally supported the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). We were basically a very small organization in the State Department, with very big operators at AID and elsewhere. We continued to maintain a major role in the policy making and oversight of the funding. We were aided by having a few good people and working closely with the outside community. We, of course, had community interest and NGO (non-governmental organizations) interest from all angles. It was a very tough road to steer between our various clients without becoming beholden to one side or the other that we would destroy our effectiveness.

*Q: The Carter administration many of the things you were talking about were sort of things that the Carter administration was really interested in.*

PICKERING: They were...

*Q: And not from a negative sense but you had the sense that the Reagan administration much of its interest was essentially negative.*

PICKERING: Yes. That led in '81 -- when they came in I had a call from David Newsom probably on the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> of January saying you are one of the few that has been told to stay on in your job as assistant secretary. So I stayed on for a while. My deputies, who knew I was going to leave all went out, all capable people, and found other good jobs. I had an excellent

woman lawyer who came over to me I think from either L or ACDA and went back to ACDA in the General Counsel's office. I said you have my full backing go see what you can find. I can't offer you alternative work. I didn't know what I was going to do. In fact, the new administration then sent in a person who was to be the new principal deputy. The man who was designated to take over my job, Jim Malone, did the ACDA transition so he couldn't come over right away. By the time the new people came in they had such different views about what to do on many things from the Law of the Sea to population that I said to them I can't really help you out on unraveling policy ideas that I had been instrumental in putting in place. I suggested I leave and they rapidly agreed.

I had a former deputy, my DCM from Jordan, Roscoe Suddarth who was studying Spanish. Rocky had gone and done that as something to do between assignments and said he had really enjoyed it. I said, "Well, Spanish is a great language. I don't know Spanish," and so I called Tom Enders, the assistant secretary for Latin American affairs because I was told by the Foreign Service Institute that to study Spanish ARA has to approve. So I said, "Tom I don't know what I'm going to do next, I don't have any idea of where I am going but would your bureau approve my studying Spanish?", which essentially meant they had to pay for it and Tom said, "Sure,". After a couple of weeks I went over and started to study Spanish intensively.

*Q: Let's go back to the OES type...*

PICKERING: Oh no, I won't take you out of there yet.

*Q: What about, I mean, many of the things that one is trying to do essentially to have a rational use of natural resources?*

PICKERING: It was more than that. Each of the areas where we worked in had a national interest that was buttressed and supported by or related to a foreign policy interest. So our primary view was how do we from the State Department make sure that with respect to these activities that we are undertaking overseas as a government the national foreign policy interest is well represented, coordinated and prioritized? It was partly policy making, partly 'traffic copping', party oversight and a little bit of program management but not much. We had almost no money for programs.

One of the most interesting things was that we had a lot of Congressional interest and so the Science Committee of the House Chairman, Brown from California, been around for a long time and a wonderful guy too, said, "I want to help you and one of the first things that I want to do is to tell you that you have to make a report to me by Legislation every year on all the science and technology activities of the U.S. government overseas." That gave us the right to go up to the Mission agencies and to ask about and record all the things we were doing. It was a real dog to prepare for the first time, but after that we got it done regularly. It gave us an opportunity first hand to know what was going on and tell the Chairman. The Chairman occasionally would then have hearings to make sure that things were moving ahead well.

My budget was spread out all over and I had various pieces to defend in various subgroups on the Hill. I would go up there frequently to these subgroups of the Appropriation Subcommittees

to talk about the various budgets. Occasionally, we had science projects or science cooperation activities introduced in our budget because that is just where they ended up. So I had a little bit of a program budget, it was very small but generally speaking because they were such small figures we could talk to them about going along with it. We were not going to be out of control and, we were not the most popular group in the State Department. But on the contrary, we also represented some kind of foothold for them in the Department in a place where a lot of these subcommittees and other activities had really no other relationships. They kind of liked to deal with the State Department being the preeminent Cabinet department.

*Q: Oh yes.*

PICKERING: While things could be difficult, over all from my point of view it was a wonderful management experience. We had a lot of diversity of activities. We had a lot of information to get on top of, we had a lot of delegation of responsibility which I think I was forced to learn and a lot of how do you stay in touch, how do you deal with messy problems that come up.

It was my first occasion to really deal with a lot of widely ramified issues, but we did other interesting things. I went and hired a guy because I thought I ought to have some policy planning experience in the bureau. I hired a guy who didn't turn out to be all that I had expected and had to let him go after six months, not easy to do but I found a woman who had been an expert in the Law of the Sea and was working in the Department in the Economic Bureau had a lot of experience. She came in and helped me straighten out that particular area. We did some longer term thinking about policy in areas that we hadn't yet addressed but where we might want to go. I had an opportunity to organize an advisory committee which was just after some of the legislation had been revised and there were new rules on such groups. But I was able to get, given the interest in this bureau in the science community, eight or so people including one Nobel Laureate to come down and spend a day with me every six months on what was going on in the world of science and where things were headed. It was interesting enough that I used to write Cy Vance a note every once in a while and say that here is where these guys say the world is headed in this particularly fascinating area. These are the things we're doing to stay on top of it and here are the things we are going to be working on as we go down this road.

*Q: I would think that some of the things that you were trying to do would run against at least three rather powerful elements in the Washington political area. One is the Defense Department, I mean there would be scientific things they would be doing like sonar and whales today or so. I mean there had to be other things that were going on. Two, to a certain extent the CIA which was playing around with things and three maybe equal to the military would be the business community because of pollution, because much of what you were trying to do was to stop them from doing certain things.*

PICKERING: None of those really played a huge role. We had I think rather good relations with Defense. It was at the time when Bill Perry who was undersecretary for DDR&E (Defense Development, Research and Engineering). Bill was tremendously broad gauged just a wonderful guy. I didn't see a lot of him, but I went over to see him a couple of times and told him what we were doing and working on. We had almost no problems that I can recall from CIA that worked with us on the Global 2000 report -- quite interestingly and willingly as was the analytical

community in general. We had intelligence briefings. We relied very heavily on very sensitive intelligence on non-proliferation and they were tremendously good working with us and we had close contacts there. The rest of it didn't seem to pop out in ways that were difficult. The business community was interesting. We did work on seabed mining and Law of the Sea later became a much more important issue for me. I spent a lot more time on that at the UN but less so here. The fisheries community were essentially an agglomeration of mainly small businessmen compared to the big international enterprises that you often deal with.

What else? As I said, environmental groups were tremendously important but also we had a very strong relationship initially helped through Frank Press with the National Academy. The Academy was right across the street and so Frank on all these trips with government R&D experts would usually bring the president of the Academy along and so I got to know him. They got very interested in us and they had a number of committees and activities that did a huge amount of international work. A number of my staff people kept in touch with the staffs over there so that was another area where we had tried to develop good relations.

We had the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) downtown which was a kind of science promotion and coordination group, but very serious and basically they had a wonderful secretary there to whom early on I said, "Why don't you send me out a list the of science graduates that you're in touch with, a group of top quality interns that can come and work in my bureau and can provide us with science support which we needed badly. They can learn something about how foreign policy and foreign relations interact with the science. They can see the policy process and participate in it". So we had every year three or four really top-grade pre-docs and post-docs who would come and work for us for six months. They were great, they had brought great ideas, they brought a lot of knowledge, really top quality people, so we drew on that and we tried to glue ourselves to the AAAS and the Academy. The AAAS did publish Science magazine, which was one of the preeminent journals for the science community on science policy and science issues. We worked with the National Science Foundation which basically administers a lot of U.S. R&D and science programs. We collaborated with the NIST in Commerce (National Institute of Science and Technology) which was the old National Bureau of Standards. A lot of things they did were international and so we knew what they were doing.

I had desk officers all over my activity who were related to domestic Departments and agencies in relation to their overseas programs, just as we had a web of something like 30 science agreements with major powers around the world. In the Soviet Union, I went there for a number of meetings. I became, having just been ambassador to Jordan, an ex officio member of two boards of U.S.-Israel science institutions. We in effect before I got this job had endowed through the Congress with \$100 million a bi-national science foundation in Israel. It supported grants to U.S.-Israel joint research projects in basic science. Even more interesting perhaps was a bi-national Industrial Research and Development foundation (BIRD) which again lived on an endowment of \$100 million from the US Congress. It was deposited in the Treasury of Israel paid Libor interest plus a percent in shekels in Israel for joint projects proposed by partners in U.S. and Israel. The idea was to take a science discovery and make it into a product on the market. We got, and still have, royalties at the foundation from this. It would provide funding and would get royalties on the basis of the product's success. They did all kinds of things.

One of the most interesting things we did was to recruit an American from Motorola who was really a genius at this stuff. He was prepared and interested in going to Israel to live and direct this foundation. He had something like a 70-80 percent success rate on these projects that he chose. This was way above what American industry experiences. We had very early on very smart telephones, desk sets, developed by an Israel company called Tadiran with an American partner.

They developed hydroponic green houses that fed plants with nutrients and fertilizers in the watering systems. So there were fantastically, interesting engaging ideas to make progress. They specialized in the process of shaping the product and then refining and developing the manufacturing process.

The third US-Israeli joint Board, which I was not on was Agricultural Research Foundation. It was all interesting. I went out to Israel about two or three times a year. In the early days one of the key players on the board was Yigael Yadin who had been the Israeli chief of staff but was also a very eminent Israeli archeologist. He and I had a lot of archeological interests in common. It was terrific to be able to just spend a little time sitting down and talking to him about things he was working on. I got to know folks in Israel then, never expecting I would ever go back there. It was kind of an anomaly. They had know I had been ambassador in Jordan, but that was never any impediment to working on these kinds of things in Israel.

*Q: Looking at it here you in many ways have the overall view of the science world. Where would you pinpoint, you mentioned Israel, but where would you say the scientific advancements, were there a number of scientific advancements in the world?*

PICKERING: An interesting place was India, it was fascinating. I was also a member of the U.S.-India science board and went out there too. I never dreamed that I would ever spend any time in India. They were doing fascinating things, medical research of very high quality. Science cooperation was one of the main stays of our relationship with India. It continued for a long time. They were seeking to strengthen our science cooperation with the government and the business community.

*Q: What was spurring?*

PICKERING: You mean all the European countries with great science traditions? But Japan, China were all of interest to us. China was just beginning. One of the things I had the pleasure of working on with Mike Oxenberg who was the China hand at the NSC was to help negotiate the U.S.-China Exchange of Students Agreement. It accompanied our establishing a full diplomatic relations in '79 in the Carter administration. Over the years they brought about 10,000 Chinese a year here in science and technology fields. Only about 80 Americans went to China because of limitations on their language ability and the fact they wanted to study political and economic questions which the Chinese were not yet ready to open up to us. Deng Xiaoping, had just gotten very interested in science and saw science as a huge opportunity for the future. He believed the United States was this huge reservoir of science training capability to which he would send his bright young people and then take them back to China to work on China's industrial and economic and I presume military development.



*Q: What did you feel spurred the Indians into this scientific mode?*

PICKERING: I think that India always had a long tradition of interest in math and science even under the British and before. Some of the very brightest Indians went into math and science. Secondly in our early development efforts in India, we had emphasized education particularly science education. Then we did two things that I think were really stupendous. Bilaterally, we set up essentially a lot of partners at land-grant universities to partner with India. Many still work together. Some of the major Indian universities have ties with Kansas, Iowa and Montana and they work very intensively because the Indians were interested in getting into science for development. They worked jointly in agricultural research and development, medicine and other areas of science.

Then the other thing we did was with a consortium of other countries. We set up 5 or 6 Cal Techs and MITs all over India. One of them was the German and one was the British one was the American. These schools, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), still turn out absolutely first-class science grads. In fact, I think there was the fortieth anniversary last year of the institution of what are called IITs. We've drawn a lot to the US. Silicon Valley is populated with them so is the Indian IT industry. These were all things that were driving Indian science. You also had India's nuclear program, India's space program all driving ahead. India as long as thirty years ago was still the tenth largest economy in production of heavy machinery and industrial goods.

*Q: How were relations with India at this time, they had been close to the Soviet Union, the Cold War was still...*

PICKERING: Well the one area I worked with the Indians on was only from meeting to meeting, three or four times a year maximum. Science cooperation was good because the Indians go at mutual benefit. Our people saw it as a great opportunity. We had, particularly in medical and health sciences, long relationships with the Indians. We were deeply concerned about Indian proliferation. I spent a lot of time, Joe Nye and I did, with Bob Goheen who was the ambassador, trying to get the Indians to agree to no more nuclear tests as a way to slow down and stop their taking their military program forward. That was the days of Morarji Desai as prime minister. We got probably as close to nowhere as any program I've been engaged in. It was enjoyable and we met interesting Indians, but we made few if any dents!

*Q: One of the things, I mean you get a chance to sort of look at the world, why nothing seems to be coming out of the Arab world. This is the thing, I don't know if this is Islam or Arabness or what, I mean, there just doesn't seem to be any you might say productive. I understand that stripping away natural resources like oil that the entire Islamic world particularly the Arab Islamic world their exports are equivalent to Finland's exports. I mean it just seems to be something to do with...*

PICKERING: I think you need to divide it up. Indonesia is very different than Morocco. The Arabic speaking Islamic world has basically the enjoyment of a lot of desert area. The good news for them is that a lot of it has oil underneath and they can get at it. They had educational systems which were growing non-functional after the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. But before that they were the

center of world attention and epitome of scientific research and development. They were basically the people who carried the wisdom of the Greeks and the Romans into the Middle Ages and the Renaissance by translating the Greek and Roman texts into Arabic and then back into a European vernacular. They had access to manuscripts that had disappeared in Europe. So they had played a huge role, but they fell on difficult, stultifying times in part because of economic decline and in part because of colonialism. There are a lot of reasons, but Moslems in India and Pakistan and Indonesia were of somewhat different character, and played a somewhat different role. You find still truly outstanding scholarly people in those groups. I don't think it's a generic thing or a necessarily is it totally based on where you come from in religion. Europe was very primitive in the Middle Ages. It is very true that Europe in its ascendancy eclipsed the world on whose shoulders it had to build. That was originally the Islamic world and it is kind of the way things have turned.

*Q: Did the events in Iran when you were there in '78-'81, this is the Iranian Revolution and our concentration on the hostages in Tehran and all, did that play any role in what you all were doing?*

PICKERING: No, almost none. I mean we watched it with interest and I went to the Department staff meetings. This was frequently discussed and it was a major issue and I know Dave Newsom spent a huge amount of his time dealing with it as under secretary. There were interesting questions. Should we continue to hold out for the Shah, could we keep him there? Was there any way to do that or, was this new group inevitable, was it going to be radicalized, what was that going to mean with respect to the Soviets, how were we going to work with it? We were in one of those awful positions where the luxury of stepping back and taking the long view and also knowing how it might come out didn't exist. It was totally clouded -- obscured -- by the notion that today's events, whatever they were, tended to drive off the screen our ability to take a longer view. Had we only known in the '60s that in Vietnam nationalism would be a much more powerful force than communism, it would not in that sense be seen as a domino. It is interesting in fact to see how sometimes the people with whom we fight most bitterly turn out in the end to be perhaps closer to than those with whom we had been close allies.

I went to Iran on vacation this year (2004) for two and a half weeks, and it was interesting how much Iranians were pleased to see Americans.

*Q: Were there any Iranian issues science wise?*

PICKERING: No there were not, no. I mean we were concerned in those days about the Shah's little nuclear program and where it might be going. but it wasn't a high one on our list.

*Q: Because I would think looking at that part of the world taking off Israel that Iran and Iraq where both had the populations and energetic, educated young people who would really flourish in a freer society science wise.*

PICKERING: That's true. We were very concerned about Iraq's program and very concerned about the French role. I remember several times I would go to the French and talk to them about cooperation with Iraq. And they said of course everything they were doing was completely

proliferation proof, that nothing could happen, although they couldn't explain precisely how this worked but they said they were not going to provide the Iraqi's with any material of significance. Enrichment would not be provided, but we were worried about the reactor by-products (plutonium) as were the Israeli's. I remember my old friend, Eppie Evron, who was the Israeli ambassador coming in to see me on several occasions about the Osirak reactor. I told him pretty much what I had been hearing from the French. I don't think that reassured him at all. Of course, they later ended up hitting it while I was there in OES!.

*Q: Were you there when they...?*

PICKERING: It was when I was OES, not in Iran. The other interesting thing is we had the famous mysterious explosion over the South Atlantic or at least a mysterious event over the South Atlantic seen by our Vela monitoring satellite. I don't think anybody totally resolved it, after looking at it in extensive detail it was at least the conclusion of our panel that it was a natural event. There are people around who will swear that it was a nuclear test. They found no radioactive by-products of it of any kind that I have heard about.

*Q: There was a lot of talk that it was an Israeli-South African...*

PICKERING: Joint exploration. I mean we actually knew that the South Africans had started drilling holes for a test site by then but we assumed that they would do it underground if they did.

*Q: How about the Soviets during this time? The Soviet empire had about ten more years to go and it seemed to be unbeatable at that point.*

PICKERING: Well, I went to Moscow a couple of times for conferences. I saw Soviet facilities. I remember going to see a Soviet research establishment in high energy physics where we had provided a very efficient super-cooled magnet for research in magneto-hydro dynamics. Actually, the generation of electrical fields through the use of magnets. I was surprised at the primitive nature of the research establishment, the labs and so forth. It was the first chance I'd had to see Soviet stuff on the ground; I since have seen a lot more of it. On the other hand, I was impressed by the people that we met. We saw Gerasov, was it Mikoyan's son-in-law, he was an Armenian. Anyway, he ran a science group. I had the opportunity with Frank Press and Mac Toon, he was ambassador, to go by and see Kosygin. A very interesting conversation...

*Q: Kosygin.*

PICKERING: Kosygin was very impressive. We went to the Kremlin and had a chance to talk to him for over an hour. He is an extremely interesting conversationalist, obviously very sharp and very capable. The conversations were business like, they were not you know tirades and things of that sort. I had been with Henry as I said earlier at the end of the Gulf War and sat in on some of the meetings he had with the Russians then. That was I think the second experience and had seen the Soviets in action in their own country.

*Q: They weren't much of a player then in the work you were doing?*

PICKERING: We had some science exchanges but they were limited, heavily circumscribed by Cold War military considerations, on what you could do. But we were out there and we found some things to work with them on. We had some space cooperation that was important and my work in OES also included space cooperation. There you got everything you could think of.

*Q: What about space? Was there much, were we working to build up a set of laws to govern space?*

PICKERING: I don't think much new. We had a number of programs that were already established. It was a little bit like the high seas, as long as you didn't screw up anybody else you could kind of do things that were generally going to be permitted in the R&D area. They didn't want you to leave a lot of extra junk in space but nobody was too tightly circumscribed. We had international space agreements and joint research projects we would carry out. I forget when we did the jointly Apollo-Soyuz manned space flight. NASA played a very robust role in a lot of those kinds of things and we worked with NASA, but they were really quite a power to themselves. They had a lot of their own international people around. It was hard for us to keep up on what other agencies were doing because we were so small.

*Q: Well I think we are getting probably at a good place to stop. I just wanted to say, did you when the Reagan transition team came in did you feel that they were keeping you on but was this kind of did you feel this was going to be almost a kind of hostile takeover?*

PICKERING: There was a kind of hostile takeover because we changed parties. We certainly changed philosophies. There was a deeply different group coming in. I think a little bit like what the Bush-Clinton transition must have been like in that sense. Some who were ideologically we wouldn't have called them neo-cons, they were on the right, they were ideologically predisposed but most of them on a particular issue or two not in what one would call a general theory of the case. Law of the Sea was certainly one of those issues.

*Q: But anyway, we will leave this now and we will go to 1981 where you are taking Spanish and we will carry on the story after you have learned Spanish.*

*Q: Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2004 and Season's Greetings to the transcriber.*

*Tom, how many languages by this time you're taking Spanish, where is the language things, I mean, either...?*

PICKERING: Stuart, let me think, 1981, the best thing to say is the following. I did French in high school and in college, then used it in the Navy in Morocco and then came back, I had actually passed the written French test in the old examination in 1953 when I first took it.

*Q: It was a three-day...*

PICKERING: Three days, three and a half days, I had a barely passing score but it was passing. When I came in I did an oral test in French and then did four months of French at FSI before I

started work, so I had French pretty well. Then I think the next thing I did was I came back from Europe, I actually used French in Geneva, and they gave me four months of Swahili and then I used Swahili for four years in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam so that got pretty well ingrained. I did Swahili an hour a day while I was in Dar and in Zanzibar, I think I mentioned that I got started doing that.

In Jordan I did Arabic an hour a day. I started off first with a retired Brigadier General in the Jordan army and then also he had to leave and picked up a very able woman instructor who had actually worked with then Princess Muna, the English wife of King Hussein. I had a reading ability in Arabic and an ability to understand simple conversation and radio/TV news reasonably well, but no pretensions about being able to use that at work. I could use it for asking directions and getting around the country and chatting with people.

Then after Jordan I came back and then went to Nigeria and that is about the time we are talking of now. And in Nigeria I attempted to do Hausa but could only find a gentleman willing to come an hour a week so that was not very productive. I'll put it that way at least. I still retain a few words in Hausa but not much.

To continue on after that, it was by then 1981, but in the period between the administrations in '81, with basically the OES bureau moving over to the hands of folks who had different ideas than I did. I thought of taking Spanish in part inspired by the fact that my former deputy in Jordan, Rocky Suddarth, was over taking Spanish. Then I thought gee this is a good language to get under my belt whether I would ever use it or not. So Tom Enders approved my taking the ARA bureau-controlled Spanish course at FSI. I think he approved on the presumption I might be available for an assignment in the ARA bureau. I said fine I would be delighted and so I did Spanish for four months.

In the course of my Spanish language study, President Reagan called me and asked if I would go to Nigeria on some expectation I would say yes because I had put Nigeria on a list of places for the undersecretary for management that I would be interested in going. So they offered me Nigeria, I went to Nigeria. Then two years later they asked me to go to El Salvador and I brushed up my Spanish. After El Salvador I went to Israel. I did Spanish an hour a day while I was in El Salvador after having both had the course and brushing it up so that helped.

Then I went to Israel and did Hebrew an hour a day while I was there for three and a half years. While I was in El Salvador I lost my French because I found that the first two weeks in the study of Spanish, French was a help. After that it was disastrous, so I literally got into this mindset where my mind would suppress French. It was a good exercise, but it took a little bit of studying of Hebrew in Israel to loosen up and to get my French back, to get rid of that mental block that I had built in.

I then did Hebrew for three and a half years, at post and hour a day was able with the help of my instructor to do my 4<sup>th</sup> of July speech at least half in Hebrew when I was in Israel. I understood and could read the newspaper headlines and short newspaper stories, understand a bit of the news on TV in Hebrew. I then left and went to New York and so I used all of these various languages at various times there.

I had a colleague on the Security Council from Zaire who spoke Swahili, so we passed notes back and forth; it was the Zairian ambassador actually. I found that it was useful in New York to have had enough capability to converse in three or four different languages. I was able to participate in informal meetings of the Security Council whether it was Spanish or French without any difficulty. The conversations were multilingual everybody was translated. I always used Spanish to speak to the Cuban ambassador who was in the Security Council at the time.

Then, I guess what else did I do, I went to India for seven months and so I started Hindi an hour a day, but again left before I had really captured much of the language. Then went to Russia and I did Russian an hour a day for three and a half years and I suspect that my Russian is good enough to do simple chit chat and conversations, understand a little bit of news and read a little bit but not great facility. Russian is complicated particularly to manage the grammar. I could understand a lot of Russian, which is a lot easier than managing to speak a lot of Russian.

*Q: Well, going back to that...*

PICKERING: Aren't you sorry you asked?

*Q: Well no but it shows what, I mean how did you come out on the MLT (Modern Language Testing)?*

PICKERING: Not very well, I think there was either a 56 or 59 so I was definitely not in the original period a good bet for language learning. But I found that whatever the value of that test, and in my day it was built around Kurdish which helped that nobody spoke it. Now that won't work, but it was obvious then that I had even from my extensive study in French very little knowledge of what it took to learn foreign languages. Now having done a lot of them over the years I think I learned something about language learning. I don't know whether my MLAT (Modern Language Aptitude Test) has changed or not.

*Q: There is a difference between you know you might say the innate ability and the fact that you just do it, I mean...*

PICKERING: Well there is that wonderful old French story that it works well in practice, but will it work in theory. You know, maybe you can learn languages but will your MLAT ever go up?

*Q: Well Tom in '81 you are in Spanish and you get this call, is that it?*

PICKERING: In '81, what happened was that I left the OES Bureau, the new under secretary for management, Richard Kennedy, former employee over at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission a very good guy, former military officer. Dick was an old friend from non-proliferation activities together, and so Dick said come on over and tell me what you want. I gave him a long suitable list of all kinds of inspired posts at the bottom of which was Nigeria which was certain that if I was going to get any post I was probably going to get Nigeria, which was ok. I had been out to Nigeria as OES assistant secretary a couple of times, once on a mission with the president's

science advisor to look at how we could cooperate with Nigeria in R&D. I had some feel for Africa and Nigeria and was perfectly willing to go. My wife was disappointed I didn't get one of the great watering spots in Europe but that was understandable at my time and place and career. I kind of liked the challenge and the interests that Nigeria had. I was not surprised at all. They had generally told you any time the president wants to call you and ask you to go and they told me it was Nigeria and I was perfectly happy to do it. He had had the unfortunate experience where the calls had not been previewed to the perspective ambassador and the prospective ambassador had the temerity to turn him down on the phone, which he thought was a bummer. He was the first president to call all these people many of whom were career officers of sterling reputation, but not well known and certainly in the view of the demands of the president's time not worth the allocation of time that he gave to it, particularly if they were going to say no. The system quickly reverted to making sure that yes was going to be the answer, but he was still very nice to call and it was interesting that made a difference. I readily agreed and the machinery ground ahead. I think I finished Spanish in what would have been May or June succeeded, with a three and a three plus as I remember but don't nail me to the wall and then started to prepare for Nigeria and went out to Nigeria finally after confirmation in August.

I had an interesting confirmation because by then the new administrations confirmees were being treated in groups. The African group was put together with three or four of us. Among those was David Miller, and Dave came in part from business life. David had worked for Westinghouse for a few years in Nigeria and I had spent four years in Tanzania and Dave was going to Tanzania and I was going to Nigeria. So conveniently on the panel Dave answered most of the Nigerian questions and I answered those about Tanzania... We both got approved with flying colors!

*Q: This is Tape 7, Side 1 with Tom Pickering. Tom you were in Nigeria from 1981 until when?*

PICKERING: 1983 from roughly November. I arrived in time to do the Marine Corp Birthday ball, which is a datable event roughly the 10th of November, 1981. Then left in July of 1983

*Q: Can you describe before you went there what were you getting, what were the state of our relations with Nigeria and also what was the situation on the ground in Nigeria in '81?*

PICKERING: Both Don Easum and Steve Low were old friends and were predecessors that I could consult with. I think Steve had by then left and I got an impression then that we had experienced more than a few bumps in the road with Nigeria, that we were a huge customer for Nigerian oil and that we were struggling to take this whatever it was multibillion dollar balance of trade payments, adverse trade balance in Nigeria and put it round to be a little more balanced. Nigeria had been through its post civil war, oil discovery orgy of buying and if you remember at one point there were hundreds of ships waiting to unload everything from cement to rice in Lagos and other Nigerian ports. That had sort of calmed down. We had the election about a year and a half or two years before of President Shagari who replaced the last military leader whose name was Obasanjo. General Obasanjo had retired to his farm and on that day he had introduced a constitution on the American model. They were introducing a number of the precedents from our constitution and that Shagari a northerner of Fulani background had been elected in the country as a whole. He was a generally very reasonable man with good judgment and honesty. That was not true of his entire administration both with respect to honesty and judgment.

Nevertheless he remained the balance wheel. They had a northern Foreign Minister who was Christian by the name of Audu who was approachable and with whom things were reasonably discussable.

The Nigerians ran the country on the basis that it was not preoccupied with foreign affairs or foreign relations, but domestic development and internal issues. This was in part the introduction of a new, fairly democratic political structure and regime. It followed years of military dominance throughout the civil war period beginning in I suspect if my figures are right back in '67. It lasted certainly through that whole period -- there had been successive military leaders and coups. So the return to democracy was a new opening, a period that allowed a lot of the kind of boisterousness and what I would call general exuberance of Nigerians, particularly for political life and economic activity. The civilians were more open and approachable than the generally fairly dour, hardnosed and difficult military. Both the military regime and the succeeding civilian regime were unfortunately assailed unnecessarily but unmercifully by corruption and as a result found that a hard issue to resist. The great Nigerian contribution to the English language is the word "dash", the pay off or bribe, and dash was certainly a prevalent concept and widely practiced.

*Q: Maybe you better explain what "dash" means.*

PICKERING: Dash meant simple bribery in its various forms from large and small amounts. Nigeria was then the recipient of a very significant amount of oil income and had begun to spend the oil income. A lot of that added to the unnecessary urbanization and urban sprawl as individuals attracted from the countryside where life was tough and very demanding to the city. They went for the bright lights and opportunities. Lagos as a city ballooned unmercifully.

They started to build a system of freeways to get in and out of Lagos which is essentially located on a swampy low coast connected with marshy islands that reach across lagoons that penetrate the Atlantic coast in that area. They provide for water access but rather difficult living conditions just a few feet above sea-level. And they are tougher and more expensive locations on which to build roads. All of this kind of wild and exuberant spending I suspect was accompanied by contracts that had lots of kickbacks, but it was done in a way that created a freeway system which was barely interconnected. So you had not only wild traffic and many additional cars brought about by all this new money for imports, but traffic jams that were almost created through a science of the failure to think about and actually plan.

The freeways in Lagos were built by foreign contractors from experienced countries. But somehow they failed to provide for the regular interconnections. As a result you got mired in narrow and crowded local streets if you wanted to go from a north-south freeway to and east west one.

Other parts of the country were open. Criminality was fairly wide spread and it was dangerous to travel particularly at night in Nigeria, but nevertheless it was a fascinating place. My focus was on a number of issues. How do we deal with the trade imbalance, how do we improve our relationships, we still had Cold War competition particularly with the Soviets going on. They had agreed to build a huge Nigerian steel mill which has still never been completed but was under



perpetual construction. There were plenty of opportunities for people to try to develop and further exploit the oil patch. We had several large American oil investors -- Mobil, Texaco among them as well as Shell BP which was the largest -- the British-Dutch consortium. They played a major role in the development of the oil areas which were essentially focused around the delta of the Niger River -- a swampy, difficult to penetrate and not very healthy area. When I was there they were beginning to develop significant off-shore oil resources with platforms and floating rigs and deeper drilling as well as some movement of oil development into more solid land areas adjacent to the delta but connected with the big oil pool that rested in and under the Niger delta.

*Q: When you got there how did you find dealing with the government on the various things you said, I mean, trade imbalance, the Cold War and also trying to make sure that Nigeria was if not a city on the hill then a good neighbor or something like that?*

PICKERING: They were all significant issues. I would say that the U.S. had considerable but not overwhelming influence. The Nigerians tended to be as I said much more focused inwardly so that as opposed to Jordan where I could see the King three times a week if necessary, I had a rare few meetings with President Shagari, but a fair number with Foreign Minister Audu and some with other ministers who were dealing with particular problems. There was always the messy problem of Americans in jail, the beginning of the Nigerian participation in fraudulent schemes in the United States to tell people that they had just inherited \$500 thousand and it would only cost them \$10 thousand to clear all of that through the bureaucracy.

*Q: I get one of those things about once a month.*

PICKERING: Once a month, you're on a good list. Nigerians were in fact developing all of these capacities and capabilities at that time. There was concern about whether the army would come back and reassert control; and indeed that happened just after the end of my tour. My last big cable was of a meeting I had with a general by the name of Muhammadu Buhari up in Jos up in the central highlands. It was fascinating because my conclusion was that if there is going to be a coup, and I could not exclude it, Buhari is certainly the one to lead it. I left I guess in July and in August General Buhari carried out his coup so we may have been not as perspicacious as we should have been but that was one where I think we had a kind of feel that things were coming. He was later replaced by in January by a general by the name of Babangida. General Babangida had been a colonel when I had been in political/military affairs and present when I addressed the Navy post-graduate school in Monterrey. I remember chatting with him then and when I came to Nigeria he was then a general and chief of operations. One of the issues that we dealt with in Nigeria was the Libyan incursion into Chad. The Nigerians were prepared to put a battalion across the river into Chad and one of the things we dealt with General Babangida on was the provision of American military assistance including a floating bridge which the Nigerians needed. They hadn't known up to that point about how to deal with the river between Cameroon and Chad, but which they were prepared to manage.

*Q: Let's talk about money first. Did you have a problem with when you have a sort of wild west atmosphere of all sorts of opportunities open and bribery and everything else going on did you*

*have a lot of problem riding herd on Americans, both American firms and individuals trying to come in and tap into the bonanza there?*

PICKERING: Well almost no problems at all because they came and did business and we were not centrally involved with a lot of them. When they got into trouble which was not too often they would come to us. We also had at the time both John Block and Mac Baldrige come out as secretary's of agriculture and commerce respectively to lead missions to bring Americans in. We did a lot of official promotion of American business and business potential in hopes that we could find ways to increase our exports and indeed American rice became very popular in Nigeria. A number of Nigerians became important middleman in the import of American rice and so it became one of the potential equalizer of the adverse trade balance. This in no way really balanced the tremendous expenditures we had on oil. But in effect at that time there was a kind of three way balance with the Nigeria, West Africa and Europe and the United States in terms of the way things went. That was probably likely the way it was going to continue given the increasing interest we had in Nigerian oil. It was very light, sweet crude of very high quality and very close to the U.S. in terms of transport. We had American firms that had significant engagement in the production, exploration, development, and exploitation of the oil fields in Nigeria. We had good links in that sense.

The Nigerians always had trouble being totally honest about how they handled the oil income. There were always questions on the oil side directly related to finance and as to what would be the government share and how would that be organized and how did that get into the budget. The Nigerians had a couple of very able oil ministers who knew the business extremely well and who often were chairman of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries). They were able in their negotiations to drive the usual hard bargain with the operators on the American side of the oil business to ensure that they got a very solid return on what was produced and sold in Nigeria.

There was however just too much oil income money floating around to have any reasonable control over it and those in the lead with rare exceptions liked it that way and benefited from the lack of control.

*Q: Were we trying to get the Nigerians to invest in the United States, I believe like Saudi Arabia and all?*

PICKERING: Yes I think less than we were to get them to meet some of their development and import needs through the U.S. We were less successful in this than the Europeans were. The Europeans were in a little bit earlier. For example; the French set up a Peugeot assembly plant in Kaduna and imported CKDs (completely knocked down kit) for the assembly of Peugeot cars, which were very popular in Nigeria. Nigeria, was then a growing and large market for automobiles. In fact, one of the most alarming aspects of Nigeria was the number of wrecked and abandoned cars left all over Lagos and then out over country roads. You could sort of tell the size of the calamity by the size of the remains. People didn't spend much time picking those up. It was only until much later on after I left that there was a general clean up of scrap metal and ruined cars at the behest of the military who sold the scrap. But you could find them beat up and turned over and left everywhere. One of the more horrendous recollections I have is coming to a

narrow, curved railway crossing in central Nigeria, in Niger state, which was littered with trucks and railroad cars all of which had seemingly collided and then been pushed out of the way to allow traffic to go through.

*Q: How did you find, I would have thought that if they had a new constitution based on the American model to some extent, you or your embassy would be called upon to give some advice about how to run one of these things, as there weren't really too many Americans models?*

PICKERING: Almost never and Nigerians never lacked for creative thoughts about how to run their own country and how to run their own constitution. In fact, they had numerous well qualified, well equipped lawyers in Nigeria both trained at the British bar and some of them educated in the United States. They could provide any kind of advice and one of the more creative things they did, having adopted advice and consent to the appointment of ambassadors as a constitutional provision in Nigeria, was to refuse to tell their Senate where each Ambassador was going. Shagari began to implement this by sending people up to speak to the Nigerian Senate and their Senate committee about being ambassadors overseas, but he refused to say for which overseas post he was designated these individuals. They were to be examined by the Senate merely on their capability to be an ambassador -- seemingly anywhere.

*Q: How did you find the foreign ministry, were they getting interested in the United States or did they have good representation here or again were they so inward that...?*

PICKERING: They had what I think is mixed reputation generally speaking. There were political ambassadors overseas including the US, whose interest in the United States and what was going on here, depending upon the individual, was either large or non-existent. They had staffs which were professional. I had worked in the early sixties in Geneva at the 18-nation Disarmament Conference. Nigeria was in the Conference. It was one of the two African states, along with Ethiopia. As the junior man in that delegation with some interest in Africa, I had been assigned the responsibilities among others for liaison with Nigeria and with Ethiopia. It was interesting that the Nigerian foreign minister came in those early days and they also saw to the appointment of a very senior Nigerian official from the defense ministry who was a very serious man. He unfortunately later died early and was not able to bring his considerable talents to bear in Nigeria. The foreign minister was a Biafran Igbo. Nigeria produced some interesting luminaries in the early days of independence and some of these still held on in terms of the tradition of the country even though they had been marginalized by the military takeovers. With President Shagari, they were respected and came back and played their own role in affairs which were heavily dominated by internal considerations.

The U.S. looked at the question of trade imbalance but we also looked at Nigeria as an African leader and so from time to time the Nigerians would raise with us the intensive negotiations that Chet Crocker was conducting over Namibia, its future and South African incursions and interests in Angola. We had some long and difficult discussions. There was some Nigerian interest, but basically they were not a central player or a key pivot in those issues. They saw themselves then very clearly, with white South Africa still dominant and with the apartheid regime in power, as the key spokesman for Africa. They were not hesitant to speak out about it. Their African neighbors while they may have quietly resented the usurpation on the part of Nigeria of a lead

role, they were generally prepared to go along. Nigeria was solidly on the African side of the issues. The foreign ministry was capable, particularly at the rough equivalent of our assistant secretary level, who dealt with problems, had a lot of knowledge and background and were well educated and had played a professional diplomatic role in their careers. They followed events in many areas of the world and the many things that were going on.

There was also in Lagos a very significant Nigerian business community with many very successful members. Also, in the professional community, medical doctors and others were prominent and active. There was in Lagos the very strong influence of the local Yoruba population. They were active, go ahead and particularly important in the country. Lagos was their largest city and they were the locally dominant ethnic group, Although they were only one of the three major ethnic groups, two from the south, in an administration largely dominated by the north, they were looked to as a kind of balance wheel and to give a smattering legitimacy.

The capital was until then at Lagos although they had begun to build Abuja the new capital in the center of the country and were looking forward to move there. They may have before I left in 1983 actually moved one or two small ministries up there, but not very much was there yet. It was then a huge construction site absorbing a lot of Nigerian income and not impossible to get to. You could certainly, I did many times drive, to Kaduna in a day, which was another 150 miles or so if I am correct, maybe 100 miles north of Abuja. But it often required going over difficult roads and sometimes semi-back country shortcuts which we developed in order to get around road closures or heavy traffic. Alice and I and the Embassy staff did a lot of traveling, most of it by road, but occasionally by air. In 1983, 19 states comprised Nigeria. I managed I guess in my first year I visited if not all, most of them. I went to the capitals to sit down and talk with the governors, to meet local officials. Most of them either had universities or were developing them. They all were developing TV so I gave TV interviews. I talked to the university leaders to get a sense of what was happening in local economies in some of these states. Some of them were quite robust. The oil states I think were particularly interesting although they were always fighting for what they considered to be their fair share of the oil income. That has been a long standing traditional problem in Nigeria. The oil states had divided their income more generously with the others than they liked. Nineteen states were a burden; the present 36 make the country even harder to manage.

Traveling overland, I was able to visit many fairly remote and interesting areas of Nigeria from an ethnic and tribal point of view. One trip late in my tour in Nigeria was especially interesting. We went to the upland Gembu Plateau, which was on the Nigerian side of Mt. Cameroon inside Nigeria. It probably as I remember was a portion of the old British trust territory of Cameroon which decided to go with Nigeria rather than Cameroon at the time of independence. It was fascinating because it was a very remote area and there were only two roads in. One went up the west side of the plateau and as far as I know we had heard tales of its existence, but really had to go and discover it We did a lot of traveling on roads where our outer tire was half over space and where two log bridges across ravines were the order of the day. I had a wonderful Nigerian driver who did a lot of driving for me and was absolutely superb, He helped us to get there in a large Chevrolet suburban. When we finally got to the top, we arrived in a very temperate climate at about 5,000 feet. They were beginning to grow tea with the help of some Kenyans that they had imported and who understood tea growing. The other road down was even more horrible

than the road up, full of pot holes and big rocks. It was interesting to see this fairly remote area of Nigeria where very few people that I knew had ever gone. I don't think ambassadors with rare exceptions would have got up there to see it.

It was always interesting to visit with local rulers and get a sense of what the local traditions were. We were often received by local rulers who treated themselves as local royalty, often retaining princely if not chiefly titles. They expected a certain amount of deference but offered a certain amount of cordiality in return. They were very hospitable and we would always be made welcome.

*Q: There are two places that, not in Nigeria obviously I've never been there nor know much about it except I think of the Biafran War and also the north where I guess the Hausa's are...*

PICKERING: The Hausa speakers are generally on the north side.

*Q: Which is such a Muslim and quite different from...*

PICKERING: I think it was interesting because there is still a lot of Moslem penetration in the south. There is a fairly significant Christian presence in the middle belt and there are Christian Hausas as well. So it is not universally so, but generally speaking if you look at Nigeria from north to south you'll look at a heavier concentration of Muslims in the north. This is in large measure because of the trans-Saharan trade, the expansion of Islam both south from Morocco and I think west from Sudan and development of the Hajj pilgrimage route from Nigeria, across Africa through Sudan to Saudi Arabia brought Islam early to the north. The pilgrimage route helped too to introduce of Arabic and Arabic words in the Hausa language where it has become a West African lingua franca, a trade and market language. So there are all these interesting influences that play in Nigeria. Christianization in Nigeria by the main line churches has been strong, but there has also been a growth in syncretic Christian faiths of local derivation. The Igbo east and the Yoruba west were much more heavily Christianized. I had an opportunity to visit the east on a number of occasions, sometimes with the oil companies to fly out to places like Calabar where Mobil maintained its oil development activities and sometimes to drive which was more interesting -- and demanding.

Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo heartland across the Niger River, was very heavily populated and you would go to cities like Aba where I visited in the '80s which was then over a million in population. Nobody had ever heard of it outside of Nigeria. It was interesting to see the fact that there were very little apparent remnants of civil war hostility, despite some of the brutality and some of the severe differences during the fight.

*Q: It was really an amazing recovery.*

PICKERING: It was an amazing recovery. I think that underneath there were concerns but you had the maintenance in the Igbo heartland of almost an exclusive Igbo population. The difficulties always were both before and after the civil war that the Igbo's had gone through early Christianization and excellent education and began to export trained, educated people to other

areas of Nigeria to take on civil service and trading as occupations. This over time became locally resented as they seemed to be favored by the British against local people.

*Q: Was Qadhafi messing around with the north, Islamization and...?*

PICKERING: It was hard to detect in a conclusive way, but we saw several influences at work in Nigerian Islam. One interestingly enough was the impact of the Iranian revolution a long way but there was a lot of attention paid to it in the north.

*Q: '79 because I remember...*

PICKERING: The hostage taking in '79 didn't end until President Reagan came into office. I was surprised during a visit for example in the Kano state government in Nigeria, each of the states had well organized governments. The lady minister of labor had a picture of Khomeini on her wall She was more interested in the kind of Islamic connection, than she was in the anti-female side of the house in Iran. That was interesting. There was some sense that maybe Qadhafi was messing around but hard to know. There was more importantly the growth of local movements inside Islam in northern Nigeria. Islam in Nigeria was heavily influenced by the brotherhoods who had a trans-Saharan connection originally and these were in effect Islamic fraternities.

In addition there was this syncretism well at work in Islam as well as Christianity, gathering tendencies from local religions and blending them. Several local prophets or leaders developed syncretic sects in Islam which were considered heresies by Muslims and Christians. They engaged in violent conflict and even small revolutions inside northern Nigeria and had to be put down forcibly by the local police and sometimes the army. It is also interesting that inside a northeastern state in Maiduguri there were actually people who considered themselves and were locally identified as Arabs as opposed to Islamicized Nigerian tribal people.

*Q: What about you mentioned that when Qadhafi went into Chad, I mean this is when the Toyota wars or something...*

PICKERING: Essentially, yes.

*Q: What about Nigeria today seems to be the place we're always trying to get to send battalions here or there as peace keeping. What was happening with...?*

PICKERING: In those days that Nigeria participated in a number of peace keeping operations, including UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) in the Middle East and Lebanon. They maintained a large army for an African state. That army was often seen as a place from which the UN or others could recruit battalions for service in peace keeping in Africa and beyond. The Nigerians had played and continue to play a role in West Africa through the West African Economic Organization which was also a vehicle for organizing peacekeeping in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Many of these peace keeping operations were heavily dominated by Nigerian forces and led by Nigerians, but often accompanied by Ghanaians and others. So the Nigerians looked at themselves and their military as important in playing this role.

When I was there the Nigerians spent an enormous amount of money on their military. That later declined, but it was the beginning obviously, of a period in which the military then became the leaders of the country. When the military ran the country, instead of spending enormous amounts of money on the military, some important Nigerian military leaders managed to accumulate an enormous amount of money in Swiss bank accounts for themselves.

*Q: What was, obviously you had military attaches there, what was their evaluation of the Nigerian military?*

PICKERING: The Nigerian military were seen as probably one of the better trained in Africa, but nevertheless fairly weak, Their NCO (non-commissioned officers) corps was weak, their discipline was weak, their military officers were fairly well educated but not necessarily totally in charge most of the time.

*Q: One of the keys of any really good military seems to be the non-commissioned officers.*

PICKERING: I think that is probably true everywhere.

*Q: Yeah, including at that time the Soviet Union.*

PICKERING: Very much so in the Soviet Union.

*Q: Very much...*

PICKERING: The Soviet Union substituted commissioned officers for many of the tasks that we would want to have non-commissioned officers performing.

*Q: Did Nigeria at the time there, what were they doing in Chad?*

PICKERING: We were attempting to muster some countries to support the government in N'Djamena at a time when the Libyans had occupied the long strip along the -- Chad-Libyan border known as the Aouzou Strip. It went from the Tibesti Mountains in the northwest of Chad all the way across to the Egyptian border. We were beginning to understand that there were also Libyan military moves down into central Chad and below, certainly still north of N'Djamena, to support local Muslim leaders who were separatists or semi-separatists. As a result we were seeking to recruit troops to stabilize the situation around the capital in particular. The Nigerians said that they would open up the route from northern Nigeria to N'Djamena and around Garoua in Cameroon across the river which flowed I think up into Lake Chad from Cameroon along the Nigerian border. We said we were prepared to support them with that and they had a wish list. One of the elements was a floating bridge so they could get materials by road in and out because there was no existing bridge. When the river went down it was fordable but not always so they wanted to have a permanent connection. At one point I think they either actually built a bridge or used the pontoons as bridge ferries, military bridge ferries across, They actually deployed forces or at least we were told that they did actually deploy up there. Our embassy in N'Djamena confirmed it. I had never gone up, but I had been up in Maiduguri but not to the frontier, in Borno State around Maiduguri.

It was interesting because one of the recurring events of my service in Nigeria was fire. Very early on probably I got there in November, but I'm trying to think December of that year, it could have been the next. Hal Horan arrived from the AF bureau, He was an old friend of mine. He and I shared an office together in INR when we first started out right after my finishing at FSI in 1960. He was deputy assistant secretary in AF (African Bureau). We were talking to the Nigerians about the deployment to Chad and he and I organized a meeting through the embassy in the Nigerian foreign affairs ministry in downtown Lagos with the military. We were up on something like the ninth floor in the afternoon -- the ministry closed in the mid-afternoon. The building was almost empty. As was my want I attempted to walk up, but no they insisted that we take the elevators and so we did. We met for a couple of hours and I think it got to be about six o'clock and we heard some strange noises and some tinkling of broken glass, but thought nothing of it. The streets were noisy but we were well above them, General Babangida was there among others an Air Commodore by the name of Alpha and some foreign ministry officials, senior people. As we were about to break up the meeting just sort of chatting at the end, the door to the outer office opened and a Nigerian air force corporal walked in and smacked his feet together, saluted and said, "The building is on fire, Sir!" Then we heard people shouting upstairs and it was not very pleasant. We gathered up our papers and happily gave thanks to the corporal who was sent along by my driver who was watching down below the building burning. We were able to get out. We didn't take the elevator. As we walked down the nine floors I think at about the fourth floor the lights went out and the electricity went off and we got out of the building. My driver took us and we went on the freeway that circled the outer edge of Lagos Island and watched this towering inferno cause the Foreign Ministry to disappear -- literally. Unfortunately, three or four people who were manning the code room upstairs were killed. There was a new building being built next to the ministry and a couple people successfully leapt across into the kind of skeleton structure in the new building and were able to get out. The next morning all that was left of this building was one corner of it that was still standing I think several stories high, the rest of it totally collapsed.

Of course they had a very ineffective fire department, but this seemingly led to a rash of fires including one that affected us directly in December right before Christmas. On a Saturday night at 11 o'clock I got a call from Post 1, my residence was on a different island, and I was told the embassy was on fire. I got down to the embassy and indeed the embassy was on fire. It appeared as if in the four story brand new embassy building only a year or two old, a fire had broken out on the third floor and was threatening the fourth floor. We had stored as was the tradition with embassy's in those days a whole bunch of these destructor kits,, highly flammable document destruction devices in barrels on the roof. The Nigerian fire department had been called but hadn't responded. It came finally and they were afraid to go in the building. We tried to persuade them but it turned out they had no water. Their pump to suck water out of the nearby lagoon in front of our embassy was non-functioning. They finally got in with a little water very late in the night. A number of us were down there. I thought I had sprained my ankle falling in a hole on the dark embassy lawn. It turned out two days later the Doctor told me I had broken a toe but it was not severe. My building and maintenance officer, an ex-Seabee, had managed to go into the building before the fire had got too bad and turned off all the electrical service inside. The fire kind of burnt itself out and the next day we surveyed the damage and then cleaned up. We did a lot of document destruction on the lawn and got rid of everything that we could destroy. At that



point the fire had burned one end of the building through, all the third floor and had gotten up close to the fourth floor where we had all of our vaults and communications equipment. It actually had burned hot enough to break the connection between vertical steel members and horizontal steel members holding up a big piece of the fourth floor vault, so it was not a very comfortable situation.

*Q: Of course you had the weight of the...*

PICKERING: The vault.

*Q: The vault on top of that.*

PICKERING: They managed to clean out the vault and after a day our communications devices which we were able to set up in the cafeteria on the first floor worked. They also flew in an emergency package from Liberia so we were able to reestablish communications. The rest of the embassy we ran under a Banyan tree in my backyard for about three weeks with people working at home. We had outdoor staff meetings and we stayed in communication. I had a wonderful Consul General, John Bennett, who later became DCM in Uganda and Ambassador in Equatorial Guinea. John moved our consular section to the old Embassy downtown, then the USIS operation....

*Q: His name was...*

PICKERING: He opened up on Monday morning for visa business without missing a day. It was quite a sensational job. We kept business going, and we had a lot of things happening but literally we ran the embassy out of the residence in large part. We got back into part of the embassy, our Nigerian char force scrubbed the walls clean of a lot of soot which was everywhere. It was real a mess. We reconfigured what offices we could reoccupy and we were in there almost for a year and a half before I got my full office back as ambassador three weeks before I was to leave. It was an interesting experience and of course FBO in it wisdom in the early days decided to save money on the new building in Lagos by not putting in the sprinklers. And of course without the sprinklers we lost a great deal more in expense than had ended up putting them in. In the repair, they were all put in finally. The new building was only two years old and had to be completely rebuilt.

*Q: You mentioned visas. Looking at things today, how was it at that time as far as Nigerian students because today we have Nigerian students who come and then disappear into the woodwork and working every sort of confidence trick you can think of?*

PICKERING: We had a lot of problems with that. We used to run 700 visa applicants a day. As we rebuilt the embassy, we felt that the consular section even rebuilt couldn't hold them. What we did was we built an outside pavilion with a roof inside our gate and put it next to our parking lot on the front lawn and then equipped that with seating. We brought people in after they were looked at by security and then on a first come first basis sort of occupied seats in the outdoor pavilion and then we took them by rows inside. John Bennett had organized an excellent system. He had a triage counter where each person appeared in turn and an officer worked to separate

them. The officer would look at the case and decide whether it needed a review or it whether it could be issued quickly. Depending on that he assigned the case to sets of officers working behind the windows and then they would review the documents, calling the people up and if it was a hard case then they would go to a particular crew that was devoted to hard cases. If it looked like an easy issue it was reviewed by a consular officer and usually issued on the spot. We managed to do 700 cases in the morning and issue them all in the afternoon and the people would come back the next morning to pick up their passports and visas, which was a very efficient operation. We had probably at least a 25 or 30 percent refusal rate in those days, which is low these days but was very high because of the inability of Nigerians to maintain connections at home or to indicate that they could support themselves in the US. Nevertheless, it seemed to work very well. John was very good...stayed attached to a lot of these people and it was useful for contacts. It was an interesting way to run things. John had a lookout arrangement that gave us an opportunity to meet political figures and others of importance who stopped in for visas.

*Q: Did you have a problem of certainly I experienced in the Far East and Korea of important figures pushing terrible visa cases on you?*

PICKERING: Often we did, but if they would come to me my whole pattern in the Foreign Service was to say, "We would be very happy to take a look at this, but I don't issue the visa. He or she has to meet U.S. requirements. The visa officer is individually responsible under US law, and the visa officer at my request will give it a good look and if they can issue they will but if they can't they will have my full backing to refuse." This is the way we did referrals and people would appreciate that and we would take a look at the case and see whether it could be issued or not.

*Q: You were there during the early years of the Reagan administration and Chester Crocker was pushing constructive engagement from South Africa and again that was early days. How was that viewed by this...?*

PICKERING: Well I think all over the continent with the exception of South Africa it was viewed with uncertainty and with skepticism. I mean the fact that Chet was ultimately successful in securing the Namibian independence and Cuban withdrawal was outstanding. That helped to change views. I think also what helped to change views was the seriousness of his negotiating effort as it became appreciated. Of course, we had the Cubans and the Russians who had a different view to take on, particularly given their very strong position on Angola. South African incursions into Angola from Namibia also made things much harder and engendered a different view so this was controversial. Chet quite rightly spent the bulk of his time dealing with that issue so it was hard to get Chet to come to Nigeria. And I think even more because in fact the unpopularity of the position didn't make this his favorite destination in Africa.

*Q: No point in going to a place where you know you're going to get lectured to. I assumed the Nigerians were not hiding their light under...*

PICKERING: No, no the Nigerians said they had every capability of providing good lectures and often did, but you know he paid me a high salary to listen to the lectures so why should he come!

*Q: What about the Soviets at that time, were they doing anything there?*

PICKERING: Well it was fascinating because we had a number of interesting incidents. One of the most interesting was that at one period late in my service, probably '82, '83, the Nigerian press published a picture of what appeared to be a memo from the embassy cultural officer to me recommending that we provide clandestine political support to a Nigerian Muslim leader, a man by the name of Chief Moshood Abiola. Chief Abiola was a very successful businessman who also was a newspaper entrepreneur. It didn't, obviously, appear in his newspaper, but it had all the earmarks of a Soviet disinformation action. My Nigerian staff were upset and I spent an hour or so with them the first day, pointing out the discrepancies and unusual aspects of the document to reassure them that we were not engaged in this and why. That my cultural officer who is a perfectly nice and a very gregarious lady married to a Pakistani should engage in these sort of nefarious pursuits was almost completely unfathomable.

But, in order to deal with this, because this was a period and where we had a Polish ambassador with whom we could speak with some reasonable confidence, I began to send messages to my Soviet colleague through the Pole. I asked him to understand how dangerous this was in the highly volatile situation in Nigeria. I noted it could lead to things like riots where people would be killed to say nothing of serious internal political difficulties. The Nigerian government was not at all happy. Abiola was not with the government and was a powerful voice of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos. He was also someone who could rally people around and had the wherewithal to do it. (I will tell you the sequel to the story at the end because it was very interesting which happened many years later.) I arranged with my colleague from Langley that his colleagues from Nigeria would put obvious tails on eight of the most prominent Russians whose affiliations we knew and shadow them very, very closely and make it very apparent that they were being watched very closely. I had him invite his Russian colleague into the burned out embassy and we arranged a meeting on the third floor with only two chairs in all of this wreckage and to tell them how dangerous this particular escapade of theirs was and that they should cut it out immediately. There should be no further efforts devoted to this enterprise. We, I think, were quite successful, because at the state dinner a few days later as I was talking to friends I heard quiet footsteps come up behind me and then a voice in my ear said, "You are playing very dangerous game", so it died.

*Q: There was a rash of these wasn't there? At least...*

PICKERING: There was, ours was not unique...

*Q: I can't remember...*

PICKERING: Milt Bearden was working with me from Langley and Milt and I had fun with this, maybe a little too much. The Department and the Agency got a little nervous that we were pushing back too hard. We said, "No don't worry we have our heads screwed on and we know how to do this." They clearly underestimated the potential for street violence and efforts against our Embassy which local security was not really capable of handling effectively. But it was kind of interesting because it was the first sense I had that people could ever think we would overreact to Soviet disinformation efforts. It was certainly not a politically correct view on their part. In

our view we had the politics right. We had very good relations locally on this issue and they understood how dangerous it could be.

What was also interesting was the sequel. In the Spring of 1998, as under secretary, I had planned a visit to Nigeria probably in early summer. Susan Rice who was assistant secretary and I were planning to go out. I had applied for a visa and General Sani Abacha the last of the military coup guys was still in charge and Sani Abacha's most enduring I guess attribute was that he took very large amounts of money and hid it well. We were going out to see whether we could get the Nigerians to straighten up and behave or at least become more responsible. I was in Qatar on my way back from the Middle East when I was refused a Nigerian visa on a Thursday night. I'm happy to tell you that my tremendous influence in Nigeria was at work because on Saturday night Sani Abacha died of presumably a heart attack 'visiting with' two ladies of the night in the presidential residence. A General Abubakar took over, a northerner, someone we had known, of good reputation. It was obvious that the military had enough of Sani Abacha and his type and at last felt that it was time to straighten out and move toward elected civil government. We took that as a good signal and again we asked to come out and in two months we went out with a visa.

I came about a week after UN Secretary General, Kofi Anan, had been there. Sani Abacha had become president when he in effect stole the government after an election in which my friend Chief Abiola of the disinformation operation had been elected. Chief Abiola was clamped into jail and spent four years there. And so I'd asked General Abubakar, as Kofi Anan had, to see Chief Abiola who was still in detention, where he had been put by Abacha after the election. We hoped we could use the meeting as a way to get him out of jail. His supporters were claiming that he was the legal and rightful president of Nigeria and this made the military just a little bit nervous and reluctant to move.

I think he was being held in somewhat gentler confinement than before. General Abubakar said, "Yes, of course." To our request for a meeting with Abiola We met General Abubakar in the morning and in the afternoon at 3 o'clock he arranged for us to have Chief Abiola come to see us at a government guesthouse on the presidential compound in Abuja. I went there with the ambassador, Bill Twaddell, and Susan. Abiola came in and I don't know whether he had been told who he was going to see, but he certainly recognized me, talked about, even before we sat down, the occasions in which we had met some years before. We sat down. Tea was brought in. He drank tea, Susan drank tea and Bill drank tea, I didn't -- all from the same tea pot. (This is important because there are continuing rumors that he was poisoned, presumably by us, with the tea). He sat next to me on the couch and the others were sitting in the wings of a small setting, on another couch in the living room of this big guesthouse. He suddenly became quite incoherent and distracted and didn't seem to understand what we were saying and after a few seconds got up and said that he wanted to use the lavatory. There was one off the corner of the room, the door for which sort of faced right into the room and he went over and he was there for some minutes and came out with his shirt off. For a Muslim Nigerian in the presence of a woman I felt this was a very unusual, disturbing thing to do. He walked to another couch in our direction, sat on it, slumped down and slid on the floor. He was a very big man. We ran over. Susan quite smartly asked the guest house staff to get a doctor. I felt his pulse and it felt a very strong, rapid pulse. I didn't know what to make of that, I thought that was a good sign but I wasn't sure. Within some minutes a doctor came in and the meantime we did what we could to revive him and keep him

awake but he wasn't coherent and was almost not awake. The doctor came in and checked him and said this is very serious and we need to get him right away to the presidential clinic. We picked him up with the help of security guards and put him in the back of the doctor's car and I said, "Get our car we're going." I knew right away that if this man died in our presence or was going to die in our presence, we had to know absolutely the whole story. We followed down to the presidential clinic and waited for about an hour outside the emergency room with its little oval glass window where we could look in while they attempted to revive him. The doctor came out finally and we asked, "What's the status?". He said come on outside. So we went outside and he said, "He was probably near dead when we got here. I can't revive him and there is nothing more we can do." He said, "Well I think you better talk to General Abubakar right away." He said I was here when General Abacha died and," he said, "if there is anything you must do, you must get an autopsy."

We called General Abubakar on his cell phone; he said come over right away. He hadn't heard this and so we sat with him and worked on what press statements to make particularly because we were involved. He said he had summoned Chief Abiola's widow and daughter who happened to be in town and Susan went out to talk to them. We finished with the General and then joined Susan. His wife and daughter were very, very obviously distraught and apparently immediately connected us with his death and were suspicious of our role. We did what we could to calm them but the seemed irreconciled to the notion that we had not had anything to do with his death..

We had helped General Abubakar to prepare a press release, which was both factual, and we hoped viable. He of course said that he would get the autopsy done. In the meantime we had started to work with the State Department to get names of internationally recognized and reputable forensic experts. We got the name of the chief forensic officer in Ontario who had a worldwide reputation and the U.S. Air Force chief pathologist in Germany and a very reputable man from England all of whom who were immediately recruited to come and do this. They understood the issue.

We went back to our small embassy office in Abuja and we started to monitor BBC and other radio reports and they were pretty awful so I said immediately, "Call BBC. I'll offer and interview, Susan you get on to the U.S. NPR (National Public Radio) and other wire agencies radios and you give your interviews and we'll put all of this together." We did a series of radio interviews that night to try to calm the situation. Sometime that evening President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, reached me by phone and I relayed to him what had happened and noted we were doing all we could to help calm the situation and that I hoped this would pass over in a day or so. In the meantime, it was clear the next day that riots had broken out in Lagos and people had been killed over this. We were not happy although I think we allayed some of the worst potential problems and we told General Abubakar we would give a full press conference at the airport before we left. We delayed our departure and met the press at the airport and talked until they finished their questions about what we knew and what we thought was going to happen to put this into context and then departed for the UJK on our way home on a US military aircraft..

The final sequel to that was we flew back by way of Toronto, as we were so late when we got to London only a Canadian plane was available to cross the Atlantic. At five o'clock in the morning

I got up to take the first plane to Washington. Coming out of the shower slipped on the floor and broke my wrist -- so it was the end of a perfect trip.

*Q: What did the autopsy show?*

PICKERING: The autopsies were very interesting. They found a vastly enlarged heart with every symptom of massive heart failure and all of the chemical tests found no reason to believe as everybody imputed from the tea story that he had been poisoned and neither were we. But there are still people today, years later who refuse to accept this evidence. I had a very good friend of mine writing and saying that General Abiola's daughter was on his board and that she had raised this very important questions as to his murder while in prison in Nigeria. I wrote back and said I happen to know because I was there and that wasn't the story.

*Q: OK, well we are going to stop now and is there anything else we should talk about the next time we...*

PICKERING: We have a little more to finish on Nigeria and I will talk about a few more of the things but just a few.

*Q: Do you have a couple things you want to just mention about what you want to talk about?*

PICKERING: I think one of the things maybe is to mention more about travel, maybe a little more about the summation of U.S.-Nigerian relations and where we left them.

*Q: OK, great.*

*Today is the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2005. Tom, well you heard where we left off do you want to add on to that?*

PICKERING: Yes, I think that I'd pick up a little bit on the issues that I'd suggested we might want to look at. As an ambassador in Nigeria I did a lot of traveling. I believe that travel is important, I told you that with respect to my service in Amman, Jordan, so this isn't a new or strange approach from me. It was not particularly easy in Nigeria. The country was not filled with facilities that make travel easy. My predecessor, Steve Low, had actually gotten the State Department to purchase a van which he equipped in the interior for travel -- a couple of swivel seats, a table, a bench, that kind of thing, not that he was going to spend his life in there, but he used that and we used that for a number of trips. I found that very comfortable. I also found that at a number of places in Nigeria four-wheel drive was really quite important and this van didn't have four-wheel drive so we also had some four-wheel drive vehicles, Chevrolet carry alls, that we used. I liked to travel overland although I did put my soul at risk also traveling on Nigerian airlines, which were better then than they are now.

At the time I was, there we got to all of the then nineteen states of Nigeria. There are now 36. We went to a number of extremely remote areas and found it very interesting. A couple of anecdotes. I went to the extreme northwest of Nigeria -- to Sokoto and president Shagari's home region, where, as best I can recall, at the time I went they said that had not yet had American ambassador

visiting -- similarly to the northeast to Maiduguri. Each of those places was extremely interesting -- very Muslim areas. A lot of my experience in the Middle East, in Jordan, helped me at least to acclimatize myself to Nigerian Islam which is very different. I went to the highest area in Nigeria, which everybody nominally believes is the Jos Plateau in the center of the country, but is actually near the southeast corner where Mt. Cameroon, in Cameroon, has a plateau system connected with it that slopes over into Nigeria called the Gembu Plateau. It was a fascinating trip. I don't think any of my predecessors had been there and very few ambassadors. It was over 5,000 feet high which is very high for Nigeria. The road up on the western side nobody that I knew had taken. It was a fairly precarious road in the sense it was hung on the edge of an escarpment. We made it ok, but up on top crossing ravines they had double log bridges where we all got out of the car while the driver safely maneuvered our vehicle over that. We stayed in the capital of the plateau region -- Gembu. We were well received by all the people and found interestingly enough there were a couple of Kenyans who had been imported to raise tea up there. The Nigerians were interested obviously in their own tea production. The road we went down was on the north side of the plateau but we went up the west side and down the north side. The road on the north side had obviously been built about the time of the First World War and it seems never repaired. It was full of enormous potholes and huge rocks. Nevertheless, it was the road everybody used to go up and down and the Nigerians somehow maneuvered even small private vehicles over this road. We had trouble doing it in four-wheel drive but it was an interesting example of how remote it is.

On the way up we visited a local leader in a town called Rukari and the story about this local tribal chief, was that the Rukari leader appeared anew every seven years and then disappeared after seven year and then a new leader came. So one wonders basically how all of this was accomplished? Whether in fact an assassination was involved or not?

*Q: The king must die.*

PICKERING: It does sound a little bit like that.

On a different trip we visited a very remote area in what was then Cross Rivers state. We had gone first looking for the only Catholic cardinal in Nigeria. We found his house in a very remote area. He had left and one of the sisters who was taking care of the house told us that he had left although we had written him ahead of time and hoped to see him. Nearby, we visited another local leader who in fact was quite interesting because of the nature of the welcome that he gave to us in his meeting room. The local government secretary, the local government administrative secretary, stood up to welcome us and spent about three-quarters of his address telling us how American Presbyterian missionaries had saved this group from cannibalism. Then we had a healthy lashing of snaps and we went to the door of the household while he did libations and in a series of prayers combined what appeared to us first to be the Virgin Mary with a local monkey god in a very eclectic way. Then we visited his shrine which was full of the skulls of local monkeys. We came back and had some very warm champagne to celebrate this obviously religiously tinged event. He invited us to lunch where he proceeded to make sure that we understood that our lunch had come from a hotel thirty miles away while in fact he enjoyed a lunch of local stew. We weren't quite sure what was in the local stew and we didn't want to ask in light of the speech of the administrative secretary.

The interesting situation when I left the country was that Nigeria had had a couple of years, maybe slightly more than my two years, under the first civilian rule since the end of the civil war in the early '70s. General Obasanjo, who now happens to be president of Nigeria again, had stepped down and gone back to his farm and a man by the name of Shagari had been elected. He was from northern Nigeria, a Fulani. Shagari ran this administration over the two years that I was there personally. Unfortunately, the administration gathered an increasingly egregious reputation for high-levels of corruption. It was clearly uncertain at the time I left as to how long that administration would stay in power.

One of the last cables I wrote was after I had visited a general in north central Nigeria actually in Jos where he was a local military commander by the name of Buhari. People told me that General Buhari was a competent general but one who also had a political interest, I might say. I spent a couple hours with General Buhari in Jos. We had a very nice conversation. I asked him a lot about Nigerian politics and about what he thought about it and the role of the military. He was reasonably direct and concerned by corruption and the failures of the civilian government. I came back convinced that if there were to be a coup in Nigeria, you could certainly expect General Buhari to play an important role. I left Nigeria I think in early July and if I'm not correct by mid-August woke up one day with the news on the radio that General Buhari was indeed the new man in charge in Nigeria. He interestingly enough he lasted only until January of the next year which would have been 1984, when another man that I had known quite well in Nigeria, a General Babangida had displaced him. Babangida stayed in power three or four years before he was replaced by another man. The other man, General Sani Abacha's rule ended just before the story I just told you about the broken wrist and the death of Chief Abiola.

Nigeria is a fascinating place. Our relationship with them continues to be reasonably good. We still had a huge dependence on Nigeria for oil and they still were at the time I left a pretty good customer for some of our rice and some of our milled flour and things of that sort, which were appreciated in Nigeria.

*Q: A couple questions. At this time you talked about the remote regions, did you get a feel for how much the sway of the central government affected those areas?*

PICKERING: Yes, most of the places we went were either older established states, Nigeria began with three regions left over from British colonial government, or were newly established states which were in fact just finding their own way. With the extensive oil money, Nigeria had the luxury, indeed the capacity, to establish new states with central government support for the funding. Establishing new states meant that you had to have a new capital, a new legislature, a new parliament building, a new governor elected and so. Nigerian ambitions for states extended well beyond establishing a capital and a university, you had to build a radio and TV station for the local state, all of those kinds of things went along with it and lots of housing. The British tradition in colonial times was to provide housing for their expatriate British officers. When the Nigerians took those over, they expected housing and they expanded the base by including most of the Nigerians of the same rank. So establishing new states became a huge, expensive enterprise. Tribal and local interests pushed for a larger and larger number of states. It contributed mightily to local nationalism and indeed many of the states were designed to be



established because the tribal groups that were concerned wanted in fact to have their own new state. They looked less to the federal government for advice and leadership, except for money where the federal government was increasingly important to fund building -- enhancing their own role locally. The states were very highly localized. Politics was very highly localized. The process tended to pull away from the center rather than to contribute to the center, which was, then located in Lagos. But the major ministries in Lagos all had their activities. People got paid fairly well in those ministries. It was not quite clear to all of us much of what they actually did. Unfortunately, corruption fed off and was more deeply entrenched over time as a result of this process of new state creation

*Q: Did you see any results or residue of the Biafran War?*

PICKERING: I traveled to the east on several occasions. On my long trips, I saw almost no evidence of it. It had been over about ten years when I arrived in 1981 and traveling throughout the former Biafra area and staying in some of the large cities, one saw basically the traditional Nigerian and Igbo preoccupation with market life, with urbanization.

The interesting thing that struck, me particularly in Igbo land was the prevalence of education. You could drive down any major highway and in the space of a mile and count three or four schools. It was quite astounding the degree to which this had happened. Many of these but not all of them were connected with churches -- Roman Catholic and Anglican. A number of them were state schools; they seemed to co-exist side-by-side. The impression you had was that young person in Igbo land was in school most of the time. If you looked at the structures, they were not elaborate. Many of them were huts or collections of huts surrounded by fence. But they were all identified with well painted signs; you knew what they were. That was quite amazing because I think it accounted for what most Nigerians thought about Igbo's. That they were well educated, over reproductive and managing things for the government and business all over the country. The cultural significance of the preoccupation of the major ethnic divide -- Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo -- was real for especially the Igbo's in Nigeria. One of the reasons why they had declared their own independence and run acropper with others around the country, was they tended to have gained in the pre-civil war period perhaps more government jobs as a result of this focus on high level education. There was a thirst, indeed a demand for education. They were willing to be activists and work hard and go ahead. I assume during the colonial days they were also favored for the same reasons by the British

*Q: With Igbo's, did you see a repenetration or a continuous penetration of Igbo's into the administrative apparatus or was there an effort to kind of keep them down or limited or anything?*

PICKERING: My impression was during the civil war a lot of them had gone back to Igbo land from the north and west because it was too dangerous for them to stay. Numbers had been killed and you didn't see a large return of Igbo's, particularly in the north. Ojukwu, who had been the leader of Biafra, came back from England while I was there. He was allowed to return from exile and handled himself very well. People welcomed him back. There was no revival of the civil war, despite its bloodshed and despite the depth of feeling during the civil. It was not a civil war whose lingering consequences were to divide the nation radically and for a long period of time...

*Q: I think this is one of the really truly amazing stories on a world basis of how the \_\_\_\_ could be dead. I was interviewing Judith Kaufman yesterday and she was talking about Nigeria as of today in dealing with endemic diseases particularly polio and saying that in the north of Nigeria the Muslim area some of the religious leaders had been denigrating polio vaccine as being a western plot to pick on the Muslims. Have you seen any, not that particularly, but any manifestations of paranoia or political opportunism on the part of the Muslim's to manipulate things, using western things as a weapon?*

PICKERING: A couple of things that were in evidence but not too much. I maybe mentioned this earlier that the minister for labor in the Kano state government when I was there was a woman. I was quite surprised to walk into her office and find a picture of Ayatollah Khomeini. -- They are not Shia in Kano. The women in the north aren't widely veiled then or subservient, they were not widely observant. I think that this represented for her, a Muslim, a sense of revolutionary independence for Muslims in Iran and around the world. That was something obviously that she seemed to admire.

The other kinds of things were that there were in Nigeria syncretic off shoots of Islam. The Maitatsine for example, who were gathered around a local prophet who was if anything more than a mild heretic. They entered into pitched battles with other Muslims over promoting their heresy. That could have been one of the root causes of the northern concerns about polio vaccinations as being an anti-Islamic plot. They were powerful. (Later Boko Haram emerged from the same region and it is interesting to speculate how one of these movements may have antedated and engendered perhaps the emergence of the other?).

In the later years we have seen two other such phenomena; one an old one with Christians and Muslim's battling in the northern part of the Middle Belt and the southern part of the north particularly around Kaduna and there were in fact some very bloody riots took place two or three years ago. Christian-Muslim tension has been present there for a significant time. Some but not many Hausa and Fulani who were Muslim were converted. Many of the Middle Belt tribes, which were not Muslim, were heavily influenced by British Christian missionaries and then by Nigerian Christian missionaries.

At the same time you saw another phenomenon, movements in the interest of sharia law. Nigeria in the last ten years has gone through the period of gradual sharia-ization with some really difficult problems because of the requirement among others, to stone women to death for the crime adultery. That has caused a lot of international concern as well as domestically among non-Muslims. I talked to Obasanjo about this a few years ago. He made it clear that he didn't think he could block the movement; he is not a Muslim but a Christian. But he did say that he could block the more outrageous applications of the law as well and its application to non-Muslims. That is where he was attempting to draw his line in the sand.

The final point is that Islam was also growing in the coastal regions among the Yoruba at least. It was not true that the north was exclusively Muslim and the south exclusively Christian and there would be no intermixture, quite the contrary. You found in the southern part of the north where people tended to be less strict in their adherence to Islam, some Christian penetration and you

found Muslim penetration in the southwest, certainly in Yoruba land. I don't know about the Igbo's or among the tribal non-Igbo people on the southeast corner of Nigeria. There were still many who followed traditional religions. Many in the so called Middle Belt did so, but the area was as well also in part Muslim, in part Christian

*Q: At the time, did you consider Islam in this manifestation in Nigeria to be I'm not sure if it is the right term but, anti-progressive, in other words, we're seeing so much of Islam and saying let's return to the days of the prophet with getting back the fundamentals or something like this? Was this the...?*

PICKERING: No we didn't see the national leaders who were Muslim or the military leaders who were Muslim in any way anti-modern. Education and new opportunities all seemed to have kept them from becoming rigorous fundamentalists. We saw in the countryside that the syncretic groups like the Maitatsine had a much stronger hold on social life and individual practices, not fundamentalist in the Middle Eastern sense of wanting to observe life as it was observed among Muslims in the 8th century. Rather, they blended traditional and Islamic ideas and then became rather strict in enforcing those blends. They were militant against others. I think you also have to understand in Nigeria the presence and influence of the Muslim of brotherhoods, traditionally, historically having come down from North Africa, particularly Morocco. They were indeed very significant organizations that over time also developed political influence.

*Q: Well then you left Nigeria when?*

PICKERING: I left Nigeria in July of 1983.

*Q: When you left there were no major outstanding issues, problems with Nigeria?*

PICKERING: There were some. There was still a problem with the balance of payments and trade. We never really did succeed despite a number of visits and hard work by my people in getting Americans significantly to increase trade and investment in Nigeria outside the oil industry -- but more importantly to sell in Nigeria to counter balance the very large and beneficial trade balance in favor of Nigeria. That was difficult. We had good but not perfect relations with the Nigerians. They were supportive on a number of questions, particularly in West Africa where they had already begun to play a role in Economic Organization of West African States (ECOWAS) with a Nigerian military participation in peace keeping especially in Liberia first and then Sierra Leone. There was a change of government in Ghana when I was there that put Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlins in charge, a military officer The Nigerians felt strongly enough about that to expel Ghanaians and they did it, they said, because democracy had been overthrown. Not much reflection then on their own history of military coups! It had the advantage of reopening jobs for Nigerians that the Ghanaians were doing in the country. The Nigerians were clearly interested in becoming even more powerful leaders on the African continent. They saw themselves as certainly in their part of the continent the biggest country and therefore the most important country in the region. They had begun to have a look around at who else might come along, including South Africa. There was some relationship there but not much of anything that mattered had really been established. They had supported the ANC (African

National Congress) in South Africa and its interest in obviously gaining power, ending apartheid and in opening up South Africa.

*Q: Well then in '80, 1983 whither?*

PICKERING: It was very interesting because in June of '83 I was in London for some minor medical treatment. I think I had it on a Monday and was back in the hotel with my wife about six thirty waiting to go out to dinner. I got an unexpected call from Ken Dam who was then George Shultz's deputy secretary. Out of the blue, Ken said, "We want you to go be our next ambassador in El Salvador." I hadn't even known that El Salvador was open, but I said, "Gee Ken, I'm very happy with where I am and Salvador sounds like a hell of a mess. I don't think I'm your boy. I don't have much Spanish" Ken said, "Well you really ought to take this seriously, it's very important to us and we need to have you take it on." I said, "I did study Spanish two years ago but I haven't got much fluency. I've not used it and don't you have somebody who is better equipped to deal with this particular problem. Please tell the secretary I'm pleased and honored to be asked but I'm not really interested in making this move."

Salvador had been in the center of lots of controversy for a period of time and it was not an area where I necessarily could bring any expertise to bear. I thought, wow, Nigeria's unhappy enough not to have to take this one on...

*Q: How about Switzerland?*

PICKERING: Yes, something good, so he and I hung up. I said to Alice who was with me, let's wait and see, if they want this to happen I will get another call from Larry Eagleburger who was under secretary. And within thirty minutes the phone rang and there was Larry Eagleburger on the phone. Larry and I had known each other for a long time. He said, "Take this assignment it's very important to us." I said, "Well Larry, if it's so important to you, I think maybe I better go back and talk to George Shultz about it, because I have a lot of questions about what I hear about our policy and where we're going and what's happening. It would at least be helpful that I get a sense from the secretary what he thinks is going to go on there so I can give him an informed answer." He said, "The tickets are at the embassy." So I went over to the Embassy and hopped on an early plane and came back almost anonymously. My wife of course knew I was there. The next morning after I got back I spent an early hour with George Shultz. He was very kind to give me a lot of time and we spent an hour and talked about this -- mainly the situation and the policy. George in his usual tremendous way said, "I picked you, I don't know you but everybody told me you could do this job." I said, "That's flattering," and then he said, "I know how it is around here, you know, if you don't take this job, don't worry it is not going to impact your career", he said, "I'll make sure." I said, "That's kind of you", and then I said, "Let's talk about the policy and what you're doing and where it's going." I said, "Here are my ideas, I've thought a lot about it,". He said, "We are both in the same book. I have a meeting now, come back in half an hour." I did, we spent another 30 minutes talking and at the end I said, "You've convinced me. I know I'll have your support and that the direction in which you and I have talked about going is the right direction. I will do my best." (I had not met with Tom Enders who was the assistant secretary before hand). Secretary Shultz said, ; come with me, we're going to the White House to see the president." So we went over to the White House and waited in that little oval room

downstairs that opens up onto the back lawn. He said, "The president has gone out, he'll be back in few minutes and I want to introduce you to him as our next ambassador to El Salvador." He was in a huge battle, I didn't know much about that. The White House had planned to send a military officer, a perfectly nice guy I knew him later, I guess he later went to an ambassadorship in another country, but George Shultz didn't think that this was the right person or was the right approach in the White House to deal with the problem in El Salvador.

The president came in, we shook hands and he said he was very happy to see me. George introduced me as the next ambassador to El Salvador, the president said, "That's fine, we are delighted to have you." I said, "I'm honored to serve." George then said, "Now come with me." So we got in the car and went back over to the State Department and he had a press appearance at the noon briefing. We went into the press room. Tony Motley had just come back from Brazil and he introduced me and said Tony was going in to take Tom Ender's place and he had me to go in to take Deane Hinton's place in El Salvador. So he introduced us. I didn't have any time to call my wife much less my daughter who was in the State Department working as a lawyer. After that I got on the phone to Alice and said this was going to go ahead and I had discussed the policy ideas with the secretary. She and I talked about the logistics. She said she had a good idea that if I saw Shultz, I would take the job however hard and challenging it looked. She of course was right. She became a great fan of George Shultz and so did I. I went back to London and to Nigeria for a week and then I persuaded them that I really needed help on Spanish. I came back and did Spanish intensively for two weeks, went back to Lagos again, signed out of Nigeria and then I came back and spent my time reading into El Salvador in the afternoons and intensive doing Spanish in the morning from 7:00 a.m. to noon.

*Q: Our whole Central American policy was very much dominated by the president's concern about this and it was in a way kind of like, not necessarily the same situation at all, but like Iraq here a president came in with a real concern and there was a problem there too. About this, what had you as a professional Foreign Service officer off in Nigeria been picking up about our policy at that time and the situation in Central America?*

PICKERING: Enough to say that you are right that one immediately thinks in later years of some of the concern about Iraq and of course in the pre-preoccupation with Central America. Congress, particularly the Democrats and the public had Vietnam very much in mind then as we moved into Central America. Vietnam had a certainly serious influence on the way people were thinking in the country. It had less influence on the president's concern. The president was deeply preoccupied with what he saw as the growth of communist penetration. He talked about local issues of under development and poor governance some, but also to a greater extent he was spun up in this Cold War concern by people around him who were deeply despairing of the notion that the communist dominos were going to tumble toward Texas. In effect these small states were only becoming communist stepping stones to a full penetration of the hemisphere with the aid and support of Fidel Castro and others. That seemed to me an exaggeration and ignored many of the problems of these countries -- overpopulation especially in El Salvador, authoritarian, 'oligarchical' and or military dominated regimes, poor economic development, poverty and serious unemployment and human and civil rights violations.

*Q: This is Tape 8, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: So we were in El Salvador and we are talking about the policy. Some elements on both sides of this were all true. In one sense it was very clear that the guerrilla movement was being supported by Cuba, and Nicaragua played an important role. The FMLN (Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation) in El Salvador -- the grouping of five as I remember independent of organizations conducting guerrilla warfare against the government was there and gaining ground. On the other side, there was a deep fear that we were over hyping this activity and that we would become extensively bogged down as in Vietnam. There was widespread concern that we were supporting all the wrong people -- the conservative oligarchs and military -whose major role was to insure their continued domination of their country. These was real concern these people were not particularly political adept and certainly not very interested in democracy as we saw it -- they had committed very serious human rights violations, but so had the guerillas. Much of that was true in El Salvador. I think that there was in the mind of most of those in the State Department who followed this, the need for what I would call a robust, but balanced policy. It would be a policy that involved a tremendous amount of focus on economic development, on social change, on democratic development and certainly fighting against the abuses that were committed in various places either by the military or by the shadowy death squads or by the people in the extreme right who were presumed to be the supporters of or indeed the underwriters of this kind of activity. There was at the same time a realization of the need to promote local alternatives in a stronger more adept military which could deal with the military action of the FMLN.

A different group, some in the NSC staff and some in the Pentagon although much less in the Pentagon, maybe a few in the intelligence community, Bill Casey was then the DCI, (Director, Central Intelligence) who thought that the only way to deal with this was in fact to stand up the military.- to focus all of our attention on the military regardless of the fact that they had been abusive to their own people. They were seen as the only bulwark, the only defense system, between El Salvador and the Rio Grande. Therefore they had to be at all costs supported -- backed and supplied. The Congress was divided down the middle with more people skeptical and questioning every day as in fact the policy didn't seem to be making progress. It didn't provide answers or a solution to the problem. Things were getting messier and messier. This was aided and abetted by clear efforts on the part of those who didn't like our policy, including those who opposed our continuing support for the regimes in the region, to develop a strong domestic base in the United States.

Some of those had very strong connections through the Roman Catholic Church to the Liberation Theology Movement. It was basically a very liberal movement in the church that saw progress coming through major changes toward societies which dealt more fairly with their members. They were aligned with the guerrilla organizations in El Salvador through a common purpose to bring about change -- and there were priests, some from Europe, who were involved with the FMLN. Others were not; the church was divided. Many of those groups particularly after the right wing had murdered nuns, American nuns in El Salvador, were clearly aligned with the need for change. One of my predecessors, Robert White, who was Ambassador at the time of those murders, was rightly outraged by what had and was happening with the collusion of the military and right wing leadership. Bob and I were both graduate school colleagues together so I knew Bob quite well. Bob felt that as he went from the Carter administration into the Reagan

administration that the policy had changed radically against what we were trying to do. In fact that if you talked to him he would say that we in effect were providing support to the worst elements in the country rather than the best elements. This created a significant domestic backlash against the administration's ideas. There was extensive debate and a lot of consternation and unhappiness. What to do was not a settled question. That is one of the reasons, to get back to your question, why what I knew about it in Nigeria disturbed me and why I wanted to talk to the secretary of state before I accepted his offer of the job.

*Q: How did you find Shultz looking at this? Shultz of course had been brought in this wasn't long after Haig had left?*

PICKERING: Yes, I'm trying to think when al Haig had actually left. The administration began in January of '81, by '83 he was out. I had actually seen General Haig, he was meeting some Nigerians in Brussels. But that was the only time I had actually seen him in the course of my Nigerian assignment I went up there to join the Nigerians for a meeting. I suspect that Secretary Shultz had been in office for maybe for a maximum of six months, maybe less, I will have to look at the record. Secretary Shultz was very open to what I would call a policy that was prepared to fight the battle on multiple fronts, political, economic, social, on the need for real changes, and very open to the need for greater foreign economic assistance and dealing with economic and social problems as a principal way of bringing about change and an end to conflict in El Salvador..

*Q: You are talking about multiple fronts including within the Washington timeframe?*

PICKERING: Exactly, and including basically the ideas and thoughts that had come out of the then ARA Bureau of the State Department under Tom Enders. It was interesting later having a chat with Tom, after I had accepted the job, the things that he told me about where he thought things we ought to be doing, where he wanted to take them and where, in fact, I thought Shultz would go. I didn't find huge differences there. I think Tom had his differences with other parts of the bureaucracy and that probably led to the pressure on Shultz to bring in another assistant secretary.

*Q: Unlike so many assignments, when you went out there you really had a real agenda then, I mean, what you wanted to do which is go in?*

PICKERING: We had a big agenda.

*Q: Sometimes you are just continuing as it was in places and deal with the problems as they come up.*

PICKERING: I mean we had to do it in the light of the big split in the country, in light of a very negative press, in light of strong opposition groups all around the country, in light of a credibility problem of some significance for what we were saying and doing, in light of different views about how to handle the military, in light of different views about how to deal with the Salvadorians, in light of some different views about how to deal with human rights violations in

El Salvador. I felt Shultz, Tony Motley, certainly we talked we all had pretty much the same view and I don't think it radically changed while I was there.

*Q: As you prepped for this, were you hit by the various pressure groups including the glitterati of the movie and TV people?*

PICKERING: What I did was I told the desk that I wanted to see as many people as I could, including people from the opposition groups. The human rights groups asked and, of course, I said I would see them. I wanted to be in a position to tell everybody that I had heard their views and that I was going to stay in touch with them and I felt very confident after talking to George Shultz we would pay attention to their concerns. I said that they should watch us and score us on our successes and failures rather than on their predispositions to take one or another spokesman of the administration as the final view. As I remember I don't think that the confirmation hearings were particularly bad. I have to go back and look, but I think we got all the usual range of questions. However, none that I found was terribly troubling to me. I don't come away these years later thinking there was any particular special problem there.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the White House, the NSC, later this Camp Iran, Contra affair?*

PICKERING: I certainly did.

*Q: Was this apparent that there was a real...*

PICKERING: It was apparent that there was a real difference. Constantine Menges who's since left the scene, although he and I have always had personal relationship, had an entirely different view. He had a sense of what I would call it a fairly highly developed concern (even paranoia) about what was happening in the region. This tended to drive his perspectives about the untrustworthiness of the opposition and their willingness to use all possible methods to destroy us and our, or maybe his, friends in El Salvador. He didn't advocate to me that we should involve ourselves in human rights violations or death squads. He was circumspect and very careful about that. Most of the other people tended to focus in on their own bureaucratic stove pipes and the related fears -- so AID and its program, the Defense Department and the training and equipment program to help the Salvadorian military -- where was that all going were for them key questions.

I found a couple of things that I thought were anomalies. There had been a withdrawal of dependents from the mission. I think that Deane had reversed that or Ken Blakely who was the Chargé, DCM in-between, so I didn't have to reverse that. But I was very supportive of getting families back. I also found and it took me a year to get it resolved, that the military had such short tours, I think one-year tours that it impacted their effectiveness, They spent the first six months learning what they were doing and the next six months planning for their next assignment. So for the principal military advisors, I fought hard to get their families in for a minimum two-year tour. That made a difference with most if not all the military.



*Q: I was in Vietnam when they had a six months and there the assignment was six months in the field and six months back in the...and I mean they were always on a learning curve with the short end of the learning curve too.*

PICKERING: Yes and the State Department assignments were two and three years, two for regular tours, and then with an extension of a year for key players. I had a lot of really good officers. A number of my junior officers were on extensions or were willing to extend as I remember. They were committed and they saw this as an important assignment for the interests of the country, but they were not too sure whether their own futures were being served. I tried to help with the latter, especially on evaluation reports.

One of the most valuable things the Department did for me before I went out was to ask INR to set up an all-day meeting with six or so counter insurgency experts. They were good and experienced and not all of the same view. I used the time to listen and ask questions and learned a great deal which served me very well in El Salvador.

*Q: How about the CIA?*

PICKERING: The CIA was down there obviously in an important role, both collecting intelligence and providing advice to El Salvador to be able to improve its own intelligence collection and action responsibilities. I think I had maybe two and a half chiefs of station and we got along well. I felt that they reported to me what was going on and what they were doing. That part I think went reasonably well. They had some action support programs which I was aware of and which helped make important gains. Ollie North came down a couple of times, but seemed to want to avoid speaking with me and the State Department people in the Embassy, something that I took as a mixed blessing!

*Q: You are talking about Oliver North.*

PICKERING: Oliver North, that was never any difficulty in the sense that he came down and talked to the people he wanted to talk to, I don't think I ever got any report from him on what he was doing or had concluded about the situation. There were more interesting visits however. If you want to look at the range of them.

Most weekends I would have Congressmen down, particularly as I got settled in and things got moving. Weekend trips were easy from Washington for them. They were always interesting. They always wanted to spend a lot of time, as they should have, asking questions. We had frequent disagreements; I remember a long evening I spent with Steve Solarz at the end of my first week, when he came down without others. I'd known Steve well in the Middle East from my days in Jordan and I felt that we had a relationship of mutual confidence. He had a lot of very tough questions for me and I was there and we went through the grilling and I responded to him about what was going on. I had my Embassy people there too and they were helpful, but I had to and wanted to carry the load. It was a good dialogue, but if you know Steve well, you know that Steve has always had an endless number of tremendous penetrating questions about everything that was going on. They were all good questions. We worked at giving him honest answers. He was immensely skeptical because the distrust over El Salvador had built up over a long period of

time. The meeting and grilling by Steve was good preparation for what I did later on, fairly frequently, to fly back to the States and brief the Congress particularly as we had an important bill coming along.

I saw a lot of the press. I think that one of the things that's interesting, I don't think it was timed for my arrival, that would be hubris, but about that time I got there in early September 1983 the FMLN began a large scale offensive. It lasted from September, I got there I think right after Labor Day, until January in which we may have counted eighty engagements between the guerrillas and Salvadorian military organized units of at least company to battalion size. It was positional warfare. The guerrillas took seventy to eighty percent of those particular battles in terms of comparative losses and even destruction or decimation of some of the units. They almost cut the country in half by destroying a key bridge over the Lempa River. It was a very depressing period in which to arrive and see that happening. It showed how hard, if not impossible, it was for the Salvadorian military to be effective countering these guerrilla activities. Some of them came about through countering small offensive operations planned by the Salvadorian military, but a lot of them came out through ambushes, traps, or over guerrilla attacks against positions held by the Salvadorian military or patrol areas of the Salvadorian military. As I said they took down a suspension bridge over the main river bifurcating the country for a time. That was replaced with a causeway and Bailey bridge. But nevertheless they had for a while cut the country in half and left of the countryside unprotected and out of government hands. It helped to destroyed government moral and a lot of units that were just being stood up to deal with the conflict were badly cut up. They had no real training, poor leadership, little support. The fascinating thing was that for the next two years we had almost no positional warfare. They had exhausted themselves in this effort -- they had overstressed themselves...

*Q: A little bit like the Tet Offensive.*

PICKERING: A bit like it. It gave the government breathing space to do a lot of things, including setting up a training camp in Honduras where the US helped train battalion-sized units in a rotational arrangement Training could take place there in circumstances where they were not under constant attack. (That led a year later to setting up in El Salvador a similar training facility in former cotton warehouses near La Union in the east of El Salvador which could be reasonably protected and which in effect also provided first class training to the Salvadorian military.) In the meantime, there were two or three heavy battalions that had been trained in the U.S. One of them, the Atlacatl battalion, had been involved in a very bad massacre in the northern part of the country in a place called "El Mozote". We knew less about that then than we know now. It was certainly due in large part to the leadership of the unit. It was a tough unit of well-trained men who obviously violated the rules of war. The failure of command was clear and maybe failure in our training as well. They massacred villagers in a remote area in the north, which had been pretty thoroughly penetrated by the guerrillas.

We had fewer of those things, but concurrently with the guerilla offensive we had a big upsurge in death squad violence especially in and around San Salvador, the capital.. Almost every day bodies were being found in places where the death squads were known to deposit them. The victims included individuals, some known and some unknown. Many were associated with

groups favorable to the FMLN. This was beginning to build up in September and October. Sometime along in that period in one of those in the shower in the morning ideas came up mainly because I was listening to the news and heard that Vice President Bush was headed to Argentina for an inauguration and it occurred to me that if we could divert him from Argentina on the way back to El Salvador, we could make good use of him. Ken Blakeley, my DCM, had much the same thoughts. We had been talking about how we could stop the death squad activity. The idea was do something that would be unusual. We believed he should meet essentially with the military leadership and read them the riot action the subject. We knew that a number of senior military people understood how to get the message to the men doing the dirty work.

I called Admiral Dan Murphy, his Chief of Staff, and with whom I had worked and asked him to arrange it, telling him why and what I wanted the Vice President to do. At the same time we prepared a list of five or six of the most dangerous military officers who should be neutralized by being sent out of El Salvador on attaché assignments if necessary. I was going to provide that list to then president Magana, who had been appointed after a liberal military coup a few years before. He was a central banker, wise, intelligent, trusted, but lacked the power that a popular election can provide.

The Vice President came, previewed with Magana his approach. Some 40 or 50 senior officers, mostly colonels were present. He and I along with Stephanie van Reigersberg, his excellent interpreter, were alone in the room with the officers. Basically, the Vice President message was clear. Death squad activity must stop immediately. He added, if this kind of activity continues, they could forget about any continuing US military or civilian assistance. Neither President Reagan or he would be able to help them. The Congress would take away all of the funding. There would be nothing for the military and nothing for foreign assistance if they didn't end the death squad violence then and there. It was that bad.

*Q: This is Ken Blair?*

PICKERING: With regard to the list of six military people, we knew or had almost overwhelming reason to believe, were close to if not actually a part of the movement to carry this death squad activity. Two days before the Bush visit, I went to President Magana and said this isn't going to be easy but I had set much of this up with him, I said we need you and the minister of defense to put these six officers in overseas jobs, attaché jobs out of the country. They wanted to know how they were going to explain it. I said I don't care how you explain it, you can tell them the United States wants them out if you need to, but there isn't any choice. This isn't one you have a choice on; something's got to be done and they did it. I think most of the officers ended up in other Latin American or European countries. They went complaining and moaning about why they were being transferred, and that asked weren't they patriotic enough and that kind of thing. Why did the gringos pick on them? That got some sympathy from the hard right in El Salvador because they didn't like the gringos and all that stuff about their alleged nefarious activities.

In any event, that was a rather unique event. Bush had delivered very well a great message. It was excellently interpreted into Spanish to them. They asked a few questions and he basically said this is the way it is and this is the news I have to bring you. We are counting on you to deal

with it. It did help. The Death Squad violence slowed down and eventually if not a total dying out went pretty much a very low level of activity which was as much as we could achieve by any single action.

*Q: When you arrived there what was the government? Did you feel like it or not you were coming as sort of a pro council?*

PICKERING: I think we all that I knew before I got there it would include being a heavy, breathing pro counsel. A role that Deane and I had talked on the secure phone.

*Q: This is Deane Hinton?*

PICKERING: Deane Hinton. Deane did a superb job and left me in a very strong position. (He went on the Pakistan where he did the same.) What had happened in El Salvador interestingly enough, because you can't look at beginning a tour without looking at some of the history, was the history in the period up until 1979, probably since the end of the nineteenth century. The country was essentially controlled through a set of activities that historians talk about as involving the control of the fourteen families who were in effect the rulers and shakers in El Salvador. They occupied dominate economic positions -- coffee planters, bankers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, industrialists and others who were really at the top of the heap. Their role was basically to make sure the country ran politically in a way favorable to their interests. They used the military -- made a colonel the president. While nominally always elected by the system -- with a state-run political party -- but always chosen by the Oligarchs. The system interestingly enough had as early as 1933 a campesino/peasant revolt in the countryside by people who were very under communist influence. It was led by a man by the name of Farabundo Marti who then later lent his name to the armed liberation movement of the five organizations.

In '79 an event happened which was important. The military in El Salvador interestingly enough came out of the national military academy. They came in the main from the lower middle class. They were all young men on their way up and this was a way to fame and fortune in El Salvador for lower middle class young men. They competed to enter the academy and it was an extremely rigorous training institution. The academy had been very heavily influenced by the Chileans and the Chilean army, it was tough, it and rigid. It was highly competitive and produced a group of military officers who were very close each in their class year, called "tanda" in Spanish. The tanda groups of military officers were in the main a team, close knit and if they did well and handled their relationships with the Oligarchs well, some of them could even get to be president. A few among the military had been influenced by liberals who came from parties like the Christian Democrats. Others who had gotten into the outside world, may have even had some education in the United States. There was a coup by a military junta in 1979, that dissolved the old government and tried to set things on a different more open and liberal course. In the meantime the left had grown even more radicalized and so between '79 and '82 when there was an election, you had three or four things happen. You had a right backlash, you had the movement of left liberation theology, the growth in labor unions and the campesino (agricultural small holder) unions and a movement into the hills in the north to take up arms. You also had relationships with Nicaragua (and Cuba) and the world communist movement helping those taking up arms to do this, You had this reforming movement in the military which actually had

control of the government for a while but it was loose and not very effective in creating real reform.

In '82 as I remember we proposed and they agreed to have elections for a constituent assembly which would both write a new constitution and act as a national assembly until something else could be elected. This they did. People were very concerned that the radical right would emerge with the presidency. The junta and the new assembly had trouble agreeing on a candidate. Deane in effect got a fairly distinguished Salvadorian banker acceptable to most factions appointed by the Constituent Assembly as the President in the interim, Alvaro Magana. He was a very decent guy but a man without the necessary political power. He had to be careful in what he did and where he tried to take the country. So I started to work with Magana, with other people when I came, but it was not a situation where you would say that they had an enormously powerful government and where they had unity of views. They had the hard right wing represented by a party called "Arena". You had an 'officialista party' which was gradually losing its strength but which prior to the Junta in '79 had been used as the method of electing the colonels as presidents. There were the Christian Democrats who were in the left and center opposition. The rest of the left was underground. These three groups played the major role in political life in El Salvador and continued to contest elections.

Before I got there, the U.S. had agreed that there would be presidential elections to follow the elections of the constituent assembly. I can recall fascinating meeting in George Shultz's office with a large number of people present, in his big outer office, and question being posed by some of the folks present. They were not wrongly worried that basically an election in the near future, maybe January or February, March of 1984, would produce a result with which we really couldn't live. They saw a bad result would be a win by the hard right or some fractionalization of the country leading to even greater civil war. George Shultz looked everybody in the eye and said, "Look, we are trying to establish democracy of El Salvador. I'm not prepared to consider our role should be postpone or negate elections." He was quite firm on it. It was a tremendously interesting insight into the secretary because when he got his back up he could be really tough. He was prepared to take the risk.

*Q: I'm told that you can see the red rise.*

PICKERING: Shultz asked exactly the right question. He asked the question that all of us had in mind, how can we not take the chance of having the elections, even though we had serious doubts about the outcome, and so we did. Those elections were interestingly enough contested by Napoleon Duarte for the Christian Democrats and by Roberto D'Aubuisson, an ex-major in the Salvadoran army known to have had very strong connections with the violent right. I put it that way on purpose. He was someone who was in his own ideas and maybe in the ideas of Senator Helms, close to Senator Helms and certainly to Senator Helms' staff the right choice. Firmly anti-communist and committed to violence as the answer to the problem Helms and his staff visited Salvador frequently and during the election actually a member or two of his staff appeared on the platform with D'Aubuisson. I had met with everybody including him. I had a number of meetings with him, some late in the evening in which he consumed more scotch than he imparted wisdom. He was an interesting guy. One of those very nervous, very combative, very debate-oriented ex-military officers, he looked rather young when I saw him. He had a bad

reputation. He had been trained in the States and then became a kind of military intelligence czar in Salvador. He fancied himself as a counter insurgency expert committed to violent tactics against the guerillas -- torture was well within his repertoire. He was associated with the murder of Archbishop Romero and with the death squads. He used his violent associates to build up right wing groups and informal, armed organizations to counter the guerrilla movement who also appeared to be death squads. He was terribly motivated by this need for militant violence from the right. I think that was some of his appeal to the Senator and the Senator's staff who accepted what they liked and set aside the distasteful and stomach turning aspects of D'Aubuisson's record.

*Q: What about the Senator's staff, I mean they Senator Helms, I mean this was both Helms and his staff were major players in all this?*

PICKERING: They were significant players. They visited frequently. They did not ask not ask to visit me, but they all came frequently down to Salvador. They were folks who were extremely sympathetic with our president's deep concern about the left and the guerilla groups. They played on that with some of the folks in the NSC and the White House. They were concerned about this. They had adopted the notion that in order to defeat the guerrillas, we had to build up a very strong ideological right-wing element either in the military or outside. D'Aubuisson was the centerpiece of that effort. I think that they had to know about the violent actions of the right-wing organizations -- we certainly tried to impress upon them that these people were out of control and were acting in ways that were unacceptable. They preferred to ignore those uncomfortable facts. Their counter argument was that guerrillas were equally bad and therefore you had to fight fire with fire. So we had in a sense in that group a very strong sense of advocates for, if not devotees to, the fact that D'Aubuisson was the right man to be running El Salvador. In their view, he would be closest to the president's policies and he would do it right. It was his charisma and organizational skills and his fairly simple approach to this problem, a zero-sum game, that would provide the answer and that we were wrong in paying attention to the other people and ideas.

It became apparent as the process unrolled, and we talked frequently with many of the parties and many of the players, that the election would be close. The campesino unions, the American Labor Movement, which played a big role, with Duarte and his people, saw that it would a close fight. D'Aubuisson and Arena were well funded by the business community. The election commission, which had some difficult decisions to make, was made up of representatives of each of the parties. We had no idea whether they would play fair, but attempted in our contacts with them to convince them to do so and to make sure they knew we would back them if they did.

One of the issues that came up very early was the question whether D'Aubuisson and his group were going to in a sense out-finance by many, many times the Christian Democratic center-left -- whether the election could be bought in that fashion -- whether the Christian Democrats under those terms would be able to compete as a result of financial weakness. We had very quiet, very limited conversations inside the USG. I made a recommendation that if we wanted to be sure to have a level playing field, we had to play a role in some financing of Duarte. That we did in a limited way; obviously everything leaks. It leaked to Helms even before the election was over. We weaved and bobbed for a while on the subject. After the election was over, this all came out. As I remember it was all in the press so I don't think I am telling anybody any secrets here. It

was a reasonably proportionate amount of money we thought. It came through the labor movement support and via the campesino union. I think it played a role in Duarte's success but I don't think it was the critical role. Our feeling was that people of Salvador had to have a choice and they had to have that choice on the basis of a level playing field rather than on a skewed or biased basis.

*Q: Tell me about the situation. One of the charges made, it's a little bit \_\_\_\_\_ weapons of mass destruction, the feeling was one of the things on it was that this was a revolution that was being financed by Cuba, by the Soviet Union, by Nicaragua and all, but from what you are saying, what I gather this was not, this was really a real revolution internally with maybe help from outside.*

PICKERING: I think it was. I think that some of the left-wing organizations may have been inspired even before they took up arms by relationships with the external left and were financed that way, but it's hard to know. There was no question in our mind that there was a fairly elaborate supply chain to bring them weapons and military support in quantity. One path was from Nicaragua across the Gulf of Fonseca by small boats at night. They seemed to have it well set up. We saw in our intelligence a significant amount of this but most of what we saw came after the fact. We saw for example the type and quantity of weapons of the guerrillas shift radically while I was there. Before and when I got there, most of the weapons were M-16s, a lot of them were traceable to Vietnam through serial numbers. The guerillas could claim that they had liberated those weapons from the Salvadoran military to deny as they felt they must foreign support. Subsequently, they were almost completely resupplied with AK47's. They no longer had to pretend that they were capturing large quantities of US weapons from Salvadorian forces. So we knew in fact that the supply system was working and that they could move significant quantities of weapons and ammunition, because the ammunition for AKs was different. (7.62mm vs. 5.56mm). The M-16s were clearly wearing out. The serial numbers showed that some came from El Salvador, but more from outside -- Vietnam. They had captured a lot of M-16s in the 1983 autumn offensive I talked about so it wasn't totally a lie on their part that they were able to do it.

I found it interesting to read captured guerilla documents. I had the opportunity to read lots of them. They generally fell into two categories. Actually the Salvadorians captured them and we obviously got them. Our military advisors as you know were limited to 55 and almost none of them went into combat. Some got caught up in combat when the installation which was usually a larger local headquarters got attacked and they had to defend themselves. The character of the documents was fascinating because the political and economic documents were totally loaded with what I thought was almost irrelevant communist claptrap. Very little to do with El Salvador and a lot to do with the ideology that had been handed off to them and that they had absorbed and become masters of. It was in that sense highly irrelevant stuff about what they were going to do, how they would organize themselves economically, where they were going.

The really fascinating documents were the military operational plans. The Salvadorans captured in one case a military operational plan of an attack which the guerillas had carried out against an important government garrison. It was interesting reading because it was put together very professionally. Every change was entered into it so you saw the evolution of their thinking and

assessments. It appeared as if they had good intelligence on how the buildings and place was set up and how it operated. It was a thoroughly professional job. We assumed a lot of that had come from the fact that some of these people had been ex-filtrated and trained in Cuba or Nicaragua -- had gone to military academies and had learned the military art in a serious way and applied it themselves in an innovative way. They had all this innovative capacity to deal on the military side and almost nothing to deal with what they were going to do in terms of political change and how that was actually going to come about.

The fascinating thing was that Duarte's instinct was, after he was there a while as president, to create space for a negotiation with the guerrillas. He did what he could to challenge them to negotiations. He succeeded after about a year as I remember. He actually proposed and then went into a remote area where he met with them. It's interesting because before he announced this he called and informed me about what he intended to do. Craig Johnston who now actually works with me in Boeing was the deputy assistant secretary in ARA and worked closely on El Salvador. I called Craig on the secure phone and told him what was happening and then called him back a day later and I said, "Napoleon is going to want to hear from us, what's your view?." He said, "Well, go ahead and tell him that it's great and he should go ahead and move out on this on his own and that we will be supportive." I called Duarte and told him that. I assume for his own reasons in his autobiography he seems to have forgotten that. He seems to have believed that it would be better to say the U.S. was against it. Well, he may have heard that from other people, but he didn't hear it from me.

I later had the opportunity in 1991, at the UN, as the negotiations went to a close to participate. They were conducted by the UN Secretary General and Alvaro de Soto of Peru, an old friend, was the facilitator or mediator. They moved into New York at end of 1991 looking toward a conclusion. Bernie Aronson was the assistant secretary in ARA at the time and he agreed that we should work very closely on them. I worked with the new President, Freddie Cristiani of El Salvador. He was an Arena party president and with his team and we worked very closely. I had not met or known him previously in El Salvador to the best of my recollection. My UN deputy, Alec Watson, had long experience in the hemisphere and one of the guerilla parties wanted contacts with the USD. So Alec worked with them. We had suggested along with others, that to help in bringing things to closure, the Secretary General gather a group of "friends" to assist the negotiations. The group was composed of Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia and Spain and with Alvaro de Soto, who was running the negotiations, helped bring them to a conclusion. We stayed, principally through Alec in close touch with the 'friends' and with at least one of the FMLN groups and were in that sense an unofficial, informal 5<sup>th</sup> member of the body.

*Q: Did you find as you were trying to carry out a policy, did you find various groups in the United States from the left and the right, Senator Helms, the Catholics, the Marymount people or something under cutting you all the time? Or is this part of the...?*

PICKERING: I think that people in El Salvador understood that I represented the government, that I spoke for the president, that what we were going to deliver we had to get from the Congress and that depended heavily on the president. We were determined to do it and we had a rather good record of doing it. The U.S. military were working closely with this. We stayed in touch with organizations which sought their own objectives and where they made sense and fit



our policy -- human rights and clearing up the cases of murdered Americans -- we strongly supported them in Salvador. Ken Blakely also made another outstanding suggestion very early on in the time. He suggested that we have a monthly meeting that would get the U.S. general up from Panama and his immediate staff dealing with the country. They would come to a meeting with the senior Salvadoran officers. The morning would be open to the Salvadorans to complain, ask questions and seek information on what we were doing. The afternoons would be our turn. We would do it in Spanish since more of us spoke Spanish than they did English.

*Q: That was SOUTHCOM (U.S. Southern Command).*

PICKERING: SOUTHCOM, General Paul Gorman, was there. It was the US combatant command in Panama in those days responsible for military relationships in the Hemisphere. After we got the leadership of the military to come, Duarte also participated. We had a monthly meeting all day in the Salvadorian military headquarters with all of their senior commanders, with all of our senior advisors, with all of their people and with staff of the military command from Panama. I always attended. We conducted the thing entirely in Spanish. It was basically an opportunity to take stock of where we were, check on what we were committed to do, check on what they were committed to do, revise plans if we had to, shift things, give them an update on what we were going to do. They had the morning and were the ones who asked us the first range of questions and made their presentations. It was an extremely interesting operational high level planning device -- in effect to make sure that we had coordination and mutual understanding and that we dealt with problems. Before that they would complain that they had been promised stuff and it wasn't coming. They asked where was it and why it hadn't arrived? Paul Gorman and his people were there to answer the questions and it worked out extremely well and we continued that for my full time there.

*Q: It also allowed you to show that this was the word, I'm talking officially, I gather there are all sorts of people wondering around there, Americans trying to put their hands in policy?*

PICKERING: Well to some extent I suppose. I don't think that the Salvadorians ever got totally deceived because they basically knew where the assistance came from. They knew that Gorman and I were all on the same page, we were fully coordinated. They knew I went back to Washington as he did every once in a while to fight the battles. They knew in fact that we used our need to fight the battles as leverage against them doing stupid things or letting stuff get out of hand. So that was all part of the way of proceeding. They were limited in what they could do; they were slow to respond on a lot of issues. They didn't have a military juggernaut.

One of the things I found astounding when I got there, which we had already made the decision to correct, but was they had no military medical capacity in the field with their battalions. There were no medics and no field medical equipment. As a result any young Salvadorian draftee who got wounded had a very high chance of dying. It was almost like the US Civil War in that regard. We immediately trained the first 300 medics, put them into combat units, gave them equipment and put them to work. We also brought in the first bunch of helicopters and included medical air evacuation helicopters among them. Suddenly the troops in the field knew that the system was going to take care of them rather than to leave them to die. It made a big difference in morale and in fighting qualities and thus the way their newly trained units performed.

*Q: Did you find yourself besieged by interest groups from the United States coming there? I interviewed Tony Quainton and he told me one time when he got caught with a bunch of American nuns who came and got into a praying circle holding hands and the next thing you know they were praying against President Reagan.*

PICKERING: I had people down who called us demons, that we were all ‘power mad’. I generally saw most people who came down. I can tell you that a couple of people came down from Long Island who claimed to know my sister and I think they actually did. I had to ask them to leave my office because they were really so outrageously in my face with no understanding that we had indeed become committed to do many of the things they advocated. I had never done that with anybody before or since, but there was that nice Catholic priest and a couple of nice ladies who didn’t really have any respect for us or our objectives and wouldn’t listen. They had a kind of unshakable ideological mindset that we were irrevocably sold out to the hard right.

*Q: How about at the White House, particularly the president? President Reagan felt strongly about this, did he usually speak in unison with you all or every once in a while did he at a press conference or somewhere else say things that didn’t quite...?*

PICKERING: As I remember he didn’t drop any unusual bombs. He stayed pretty close to the script and the script was basically that we were making changes across the board, we needed more financial support, and we were respecting all the limitations the Congress had put on us. We reported on a regular basis on the number of military people we had in country. We worked hard to manage that most carefully. Any slip ups would have had significant negative consequences for us and our efforts. They were providing advice and assistance and that kind of thing and we kept the numbers under 55 scrupulously. I also spent a lot of time talking to Salvadorans and Americans about the human rights situation and what we were doing. We had active efforts engaged in trying to work on some of the cases. The nun’s case, the labor leaders who were murdered case, other issues where we had particularly Americans involved. I had a Department of Justice lawyer who was from New Mexico, who spoke native Spanish who was there full time working with us all the time on the cases. We had a hard job cracking the wall around the Salvadorian culprits, some of whom we thought we had identified. They actually punished the national guardsman who killed the nuns, but it never got further up the line to the folks who actually told him to do it. We had to deal with Salvadorans who were senior folks in the military and some of the police forces who were in one way or another, in the vision of a lot of Americans, had been engaged in ordering some of these things. It was a tough situation in that regard.

This is a good place to break.

*Q: So we will stop here but Tom do you want to say I haven’t asked you about your view at the time the development of Napoleon Duarte and the various, the political class...*

PICKERING: We should, we should talk a lot about that, there’s a lot more I think we can cover in terms of where things were going...

*Q: Were things...*

PICKERING: A lot of the personalities that are interesting.

*Q: The personalities and also connections with Nicaragua and...*

PICKERING: Oh sure and the rest of Latin America and the Contadora negotiating process, all those things. There's a lot of stuff yet.

*Q: We will keep on this for some time.*

*Today is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2005.*

*Tom, we talked last time you were going into the part of the human rights and other nice things like this. What about some of the personalities with whom you had to deal with?*

PICKERING: I would say that there were three or four that were prominently important certainly on the government side. Alvaro Magana first who was there as an appointed president when Napoleon Duarte was elected. That was probably the beginning of '84. I was there, starting from September '83.

Magana had been appointed after the military junta had taken over in 1982 and the Constituent Assembly had been elected to draft the constitution. He had played a large role obviously with getting the elections held. He was a former central banker and I was to find he was somebody who would be broadly acceptable to the right and the left, without having to go through the process of a national election. Deane Hinton played a key role in getting him appointed for a term ending with the elections. He was an interesting guy because he was so broadly acceptable to most of the Salvadoran establishment and was not seen necessarily as totally threatening from the left. The left did tend to treat him with less respect because he wasn't elected and came from the educated, socially acceptable class. The right saw him basically as a compromise figure. So he played the role somewhere between the role of an actor, executor on the one hand and on the other a traditional kind European figurehead -- he worked somewhere in between. He was capable of getting things done but it took me quite a bit of time to motivate him and some negotiating about what could be accomplished. When he committed to do something, he did make a serious effort. He also had good judgment, had a good feel, for what he could do and couldn't do in certain circumstances. Salvador was coming out of an evolution where you had a junta takeover, an assembly elected, and you still had a period where I would say there was some vacuum in the executive authority. I had to contend with that for most of the time before Duarte was elected. Magana was always available. He had rather sage advice about things that could be done and things that could not be done and had a pretty good feel for what was going on behind the scenes. He was very much a member of the small but very well educated and quite professional Salvadorian elite. He had no political ambition or interest in a future in politics. I would suppose that politically he was closer to the views of the old officialista party (PCP) and maybe to Arena on the right than he was to the Christian Democrat party on the center left.

*Q: Was he the type of person you felt comfortable bringing American representatives from all sorts of places?*

PICKEING: Yes, he was certainly very presentable. He saw lots of Congressmen during that period. Particularly in my first year we had very intense visits from American congressmen. They knew, because we told them, of his limitations in being able to deliver lots of very hard things. It was easy to come to El Salvador from Washington on a weekend so we had a lot of weekend visits when people came down and stayed over Friday and Saturday night. They came in small groups and so we spent a lot of our weekends taken up with them. We engaged pretty quickly after I got there in the electoral process -- first for a president and then for a new National Assembly.

Unless they insisted, for small groups and leaders, they were invited to stay in our small residence.

In any event, both of these elections attracted a lot of attention. The Congress sent a lot of delegations. The presidential election was first and Duarte was widely known. That election attracted the most attention. There were about 1300 observers from all around the world for that election. For a small country like El Salvador it was quite a burden. Our Embassy took care of the Americans. We had military helicopters in country on a regular basis and used them to move observers around. In the previous election in 1982, the guerrillas had been able to use their forces to shutdown most of the elections in one of the provinces of El Salvador by laying siege to the capital city (Usulután) and they made it difficult for people to vote outside in the province of that capital city. That did not happen in 1984. The army said the soldiers would not vote so they could defend the polling places. Voting took place widely except for the far northern areas regularly under guerilla control. But polling booths were set up nearby for those areas and there were some votes recorded even there.

In the second set of elections, the army played a significant role in dealing with guerilla attacks. We will talk more about that later.

Let me go on with some of the other personalities. In charge of the defense ministry was General Eugenio Vides Casanova who was the minister of defense and a general. Some of his career had been in the police and National Guard, not places with sterling reputations. He came with a sort of mixed reputation, nothing that was specific or heavily documented against him in those days, but certainly, carefully protective of the military and their rights and privileges. One has to understand the military in El Salvador, particularly in that period, were products of the military academy heavily influenced by the Chileans in its kind of formative period. As a result it became two things: one, a place for the education of the military who believed they were the true fourth branch of government. In a place like El Salvador, they played a hugely important role. And then the tradition was from the '20s on and maybe a little before that the fourteen families who ran El Salvador always made it a point to have a military officer or retired military officer elected as president. So the military saw the profession also as a stepping-stone to power and many of the cadets were lower middle class boys who were in effect scholarship or semi-scholarship students. They competed in the military academy. It provided them enormous benefits in upward mobility. Vides very much came from that school -- very traditional He was defense minister for all of my

time there and was extremely difficult to deal with on the human rights cases. I had to push him very hard fairly frequently. It wasn't that he wouldn't do something, it was that basically he found it very hard to move on some of these issues because he would not betray, in his view at least, the officer class. Some of the large families also exploited their relationship with him to help protect their flanks. However, he had the confidence of the military. I mentioned earlier the monthly meetings. Duarte and Vides were not close and did not necessarily see eye to eye. Vides was close to Arena. The meeting was a good way for Duarte, who was not of the military, to get himself at least a little bit connected to the military- give the military a sense of its own involvement and the areas where he supported the military. It also gave somebody like Paul Gorman or Jack Galvin, his successor, a real opportunity to see what was going on in the minds of the Salvadorians -- how they were thinking about their own future. It gave them an opportunity to provide the Salvadorans with some high level backing.

*Q: I have one question. Was there any concern on your part about being too close to the military because sometimes the military if they do something and you are consulting with them all the time it could rub off on you?*

PICKEING: It was a concern that in the sense we would become co-opted by them in what they were doing rather than basically remaining a little standing back from them. I think we were able to hold the line pretty well. Most of our people who came down were strongly committed obviously to the principals and purposes we were there to serve. They were careful to avoid becoming co-opted in the process. I certainly didn't want that and I certainly didn't want to get co-opted into processes like Iran Contra for example. (It hadn't started I think by the time I left but if it had, I detected none of it).

Duarte was important particularly after he was elected president. He was always available. I thought he was pretty level-headed, particularly on political things. I spent much time with him. On economics, I found that he was perhaps a little more a prisoner of some of his Italian Christian Democratic ideas about the role of economics in society. A little bit flaky in those areas for my perspective. He had a pretty good political assessment of what was going on and had a pretty good sense of where people were and what he had to do to deal with the army. It was always a problem for him because of his background, upbringing and orientation. His own version of its future with no place for the military made it hard for him to deal with them.

He was also quite independent. The most interesting occasions to deal with him were when he had a really interesting idea. One of them was fairly early on in his presidency to open up the negotiating process with the guerrillas which he managed to achieve. We were not at all disappointed that he had done so. That later bore fruit but much later. I think he opened up about late '84. When I was at the UN in late '89 and '90 we had an opportunity to work on the final stages of those negotiations from the UN which in the end ended up on the evening that Javier Perez de Cuellar left being secretary general with the signing of the agreement between the Salvadoran government and the guerrillas

*Q: How did Duarte use the guerrillas, you know there are guerrillas and guerrillas and...*

PICKERING: Well Duarte had of course much dislike for the army because they had put him in jail where he was tortured by the military at one point. He had no real love for them, but still had to work with them under the circumstances. I think he felt equally strongly that they really were so highly conservative and had ideas that in the end were not compatible with his own vision of what he saw coming along for the country or where he wanted to go. Some of the Christian Democrats actually were close to the guerrillas and some of them were not. It was a party that was under tension. There was a significant group of the guerrillas heavily influenced by and closely related to the liberation theology movement in the church.

*Q: When you talk about the church you are talking about the Catholic Church?*

PICKERING: The Catholic Church. There were a few what some considered 'radical' priests in the movement who had actually left the church, left the established areas of El Salvador and went over with the guerrillas. The composition of the guerrillas was interesting because people had gone into the movement from the liberal end of the church from the political left and from among the democrats and socialists. It represented a pretty broad spectrum of left opposition.

Duarte was not sympathetic with them just as he wasn't sympathetic with the hard right and the way they were going. He was an unusual person with a strong national presence, a reputation but polarizing too. His success in getting elected surprised many in El Salvador. The election was won on a run off. He didn't receive as I remember 50 percent of the votes the first time round. Even as he won the election for president, politics shifted. In the subsequent election or a National Assembly, Arena won. So he had to contend with a majority on the right. The Christian Democrats didn't do very well across the country.

Other individuals -- the foreign minister, Fidel Chavez Mena, was extremely capable and very adept. He was foreign minister for the whole time that I was there and played a very strong role in U.S. relationship. He was not I think at that point a strong Christian Democrat. But he was also not of the hard right. He was an important guy to discuss questions with because he understood a lot of what was going in local politics. Then other folks that we had to deal basically were other ministers, but those I just mentioned remained the people who were basically in charge while I was there.

*Q: How about the Catholic Church, Archbishop and also the dissidents, what was our connection with them?*

PICKERING: Well we had a couple of lines out while I was there. I used to go around and see the archbishop every month or so and talk to him about what was going on. He was a Salvadoran. I think the church in Salvador had its own factions. There tended to be bishops who were very conservative and very close to Arena in their ideas. Others who were more liberal, there was an auxiliary bishop, Monsignor Rose y Chavez, close to the Archbishop was openly more liberal.

The church had a very strong human rights organization, very close to the left and very vocal and probably not as scrupulous as it should have been in terms of material published although it had a fair amount of credibility. A bit more credibility perhaps than it deserved, but it deserved some

credibility for its courage alone in speaking up. It was run by a very strong and very determined woman. In El Salvador you never knew often all the basic sympathies of the people you were talking to and those who were in deep sympathy with guerrillas and were probably with them. The Jesuit University led Father Ellacuria, a Jesuit priest, its president was clearly close to the liberation theology movement. From time to time Father Ellacuria would come by to have lunch with me at my invitation and we would talk about these issues. It was an open discussion and a very useful one. He was able to convey what some of their thinking was on issues and I was able to use him as a conduit to talk about U.S. attitudes and where we saw things going. He was a Spanish Basque, a sensible and open minded man. He was later murdered after I left in a showdown guerrilla offensive in El Salvador near the end of the war. It was obviously a revenge killing -- clear that the military knew his position. He and several other Jesuit Priests were killed at the university by what turned out to be some kind of military death squad operation. The individuals involved were later caught and tried. Some senior military officers were dismissed as a result of what had happened.

The foreign diplomatic establishment was tiny, some of them reasonably well connected particularly some of the Latins who had developed strong friendships in El Salvador. As a result, they were worth staying in touch with. The major issues were basically what the foreign press was covering including the U.S. press, which did expend a large amount of time and attention on El Salvador for its size.

*Q: Papal Nuncio was...?*

PICKERING: Yes, that was very interesting, we had a Hungarian Papal Nuncio who is now in Rome, I think his name was Konar, a very intelligent man, obviously very well connected, obviously worth talking to and someone that I spent time with from time to time seeking his views.

*Q: Were we seeing anything with this? Was there a finger or fingers or leaders of the guerrilla movement with whom one could in one way or another have a certain dialogue there?*

PICKERING: At that time probably not for us, although Duarte was open because the agreement to open talks made a difference. Subsequently, in the end game with the negotiations in New York one of the guerilla organizations was reaching out to us as I mentioned. Alex Watson who was my deputy had contacts with them. On the other side of the contest, I worked with President Cristiani and his team who was from the Arena, but someone who clearly wanted to see negotiated solution and was willing to work for it and in a strong enough position to bring the rest of the country along. In the end he was attacked by others on the right who didn't think that he made the correct sort of deal. We all thought he did. I worked both with Alvaro de Soto and with President Cristiani and his team and we attempted to make sure that we all knew what was going on and do our best to keep the negotiations moving and on track and Bernie Aronson in Washington informed. In a way we became a kind of informal member of the secretary general's team. On a number of occasions we would join the four for meetings. At the end of the process I had an opportunity to meet with the guerrillas. They expressed an interest in meeting with me. The Mexicans actually set up a meeting for me to meet with the guerrilla leadership in their mission. It was interesting partly because I had been down there and partly I suspect because I

had been in their gun sights for a time. We had an interesting set of conversations. We spent an hour or more together just talking about where they were and what they intended to do. Joaquin Villelobos, the best of their commanders turned out to be perhaps the most impressive. He has ended up spending the much of his life teaching at Oxford University in England!...

*Q: Well did they, did you sense by this time that they had come to the realization that their hard-line wasn't going anywhere and that compromise and some sort of...?*

PICKERING: By 1984, when we worked on the opening of negotiations I think that there was little sense of that. There was a sense of frustration, but don't forget that my first three months from September through January, roughly four months, the guerrillas launched a large offensive, maybe 80 set piece battles of which 70 they won. Afterward, they were exhausted and had to return to guerrilla warfare and we had a breathing space in which we could help train government battalions, beginning in Honduras and then later, in my time, at a training center that was set up in El Salvador to increase the capabilities of the Salvadoran military. We were uncertain basically at that point at the end of the guerrilla offensive whether they would be able to come back soon and continue their fairly devastating military efforts or whether in fact this was only a spasmodic effort that ran beyond their own control. The truth was that with the exception of one or two really well planned and careful set piece attacks in which they inflicted heavy damage, but did not fully succeed in capturing their objectives, they never came back to what we would call positional warfare. They never came back to the point where they did devastating damage to a Salvadoran government military unit. We also did a lot of things during that period of time to increase Salvadoran military capabilities.

They had no medics and so we trained medics. They had no medical evacuations so we provided some helicopters for that. We also provided helicopter gunship support and some light artillery for fire bases. We put in things that were simple to provide the ground forces of El Salvador with a significant advantage once they were operating in a careful and controlled way. We improved their communications capability, we improved intelligence capabilities to collect against the guerrillas. We started Salvadoran Special Forces operations run against the guerrillas and occasionally they were able, using helicopters and light forces, to capture guerrilla leadership if they knew they were moving.

Felix Rodriguez, a Cuban origin counter insurgency expert and contractor with the US government from time to time came in. He was closely supported by then Vice President Bush. He was instrumental in making captures, using helicopters, of some of the guerilla leadership including Anna Maria Guadeloupe.

The guerrilla security got better. We had very little luck in interrupting the supply chain to the guerrillas. That was very well managed and we were not very good at dealing with it.

*Q: You say they had good plans and good military plans require professionals to set this up, it just doesn't happen. Who were their leaders, where were they coming from?*

PICKERING: We presumed that the military leadership in the basis of information that we had were trained in Cuba. They had gone out and received higher-level military training and then



came back in. They may have had some in Nicaragua. Nicaragua was the conduit so they may have had some Nicaraguan training as well.

*Q: But the Nicaraguans themselves weren't as well trained as the Cubans? I mean the Cubans would be in the area.*

PICKERING: Yes, Cubans had obviously all of the capabilities at their command and had the capacity to provide Salvadoran guerrilla movement with the kind of training that was necessary for success.

*Q: What were the Nicaraguans doing at this point?*

PICKERING: The Nicaraguans were seeking to of course bring about the revolution in Nicaragua. They were attempting to deal with the Contras. They were engaged in supporting the Salvadoran guerrilla movement mainly through supply of weapons both across the Gulf of Fonseca and probably overland, clandestinely, through Honduras. The Hondurans I don't think were ever able totally to stop such supply. It's a pretty rough area and the major guerrilla enclaves were in the north up against the Honduran border including in some of the areas that were disputed between El Salvador and Honduras following the Soccer War. Honduras and El Salvador were not particularly close. The guerillas could fund what they needed for payoffs to assure their supply system worked.

*Q: Did you have the feeling from the perspective of El Salvador that the Contra movement, which was going at that time, wasn't it?*

PICKERING: Yes, it was certainly going at that time.

*Q: This is essentially a backfire. It was supposed to stop the Nicaraguans from messing around. Was this having an effect or not?*

PICKERING: I don't think it had a serious effect on the Nicaraguans messing around. In El Salvador it may. Some thought it would. I haven't talked to Nicaraguans who were involved and how they might have felt about it, but it was also more than just a backfire. It was seen by some as being a movement which in the long run would replace the Nicaraguan communist leadership with a leadership of a different character.

*Q: What about the Soviets? What sort of role were they playing?*

PICKERING: Well the Soviets were certainly not present in El Salvador and if they were involved it was ultimate sources of some weapons. For a long period of time in order to maintain the fiction of the robustness of a purely local resistance most of the weapons that the government captured from the guerrillas were American M-16s, interestingly enough they were not careful in taking the serial numbers off. We found a lot of those had come from Vietnam or originally were last recorded in Vietnam. Some of the M-16s were certainly captured or bought from Salvadoran military themselves. We in the end had traces on maybe a thousand weapons that were captured.

Later in my time AK-47s appeared and there was no real effort to mask that. They provided the guerrillas with somewhat heavier firepower, slightly larger ammunition and a supply line and a set of arrangements, of which I presume the Cubans and Soviets, were at one end.

*Q: Was there any indication of the rural movement of outsiders getting in there?*

PICKERING: There were a few. There were known to be a few. I think there was a Belgian priest involved and there may have been a few other outsiders. Occasionally, the press would get caught up with them and they would come back with stories, but the foreign press were not necessarily supporters of the guerrillas. They were just up looking for a story. Occasionally, the press would get caught in a cross fire and we would have a tragedy, but I don't think that we saw a large amount of non-Salvadorans influence.

*Q: Did you feel, first let's take the press, under fire from the press? Was this still going with the Vietnam syndrome of going out and deposing the United States and that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Yes, we had a lot of that and I think the human rights abuses that were committed in El Salvador and many of them attributable not to the guerrillas but to the government side added to that and they became very much a part of the story. To some extent that was always a difficult problem. I think I mentioned in our last meeting about getting Vice President George Bush out to read the riot act to the military as a way of doing all that we could to make sure that in fact in their management of the conflict and in their role in the conflict that they understood that there were strict requirements that had to be followed on human rights and death squad activity particularly if they wanted to receive continued U.S. assistance.

*Q: Looking at it from our perspective it would seem that human rights abuses were basically counterproductive and they didn't really seem to advance any cause. Was this just the nastiness of the Salvadoran military or what?*

PICKERING: Well I think it was the nastiness of the hard right and to some extent some parts of the Salvadoran military that believed that if you were truly nasty to the guerillas and their supporters they would cave in. Indeed they justified it by saying that the guerillas themselves had behaved in ways that required that they be truly nasty to them. I think none of it was in any way justified. It couldn't be justified because it was so totally outrageous, but this was I think reflection of ideas among those, probably many of Roberto D'Aubuisson's friends and followers, that this was the way you dealt with the communists and this was the way you dealt with the communist guerrilla movement.

*Q: Talking about being under fire, can you tell us about your security and the embassy security and problems during the time you were there?*

PICKERING: I think that I suppose two or three things are worth mentioning. I had as you can expect fairly intensive personal security. I was always worried because very few of my people did and as a result it made them much more of a target than I was and that was not a happy set of circumstances. Nevertheless, I traveled frequently. We had six U.S. military helicopters assigned in El Salvador to move people around. We had a limit of fifty-five U.S. military in the observer,

that is the Military Assistance Mission and besides that I had a few other attachés but we kept very tight limit on them.

*Q: That was a little bit like our Cambodian experience. Was this a limitation put on by Congress?*

PICKERING: Yes it was. It was a Congressional limitation; a compromise arrived at as a part of the military assistance program. I think that one of my predecessors was asked how many people we needed or how many we needed and they said 55 and that was the number forever. We managed to get by. We had occasionally to move people out of the country to move other people in when we needed a particular set of skills or particular type of training and not always fifty-five were permanently assigned. There were a certain number of TDYs. The DCM and the military group managed it but we managed it carefully and I think never during my time had any serious slip up. I kept the attachés separate which is something I normally didn't do. I tried to get my military all under one hat in other posts, but I kept the attachés separate because I felt they had to do reporting and I felt that if they felt beholden to the military group or a central military leadership in the embassy, the reporting would all be rosy. I couldn't have that and expect to have the embassy have credibility or indeed have Washington understand what was really going on or read the right lessons into the process. I think still there was enough symbioses between the two, that the military attachés were careful in what they reported, but they were pretty good and they had a different approach from what the military group did. I knew it was working when from time to time the military group people complained to me about what they felt was negative military reporting from the attaches.

One of the things I did was early on after looking at the situation, was to be able to convince the military side -- the Joint Chiefs -- that we ought to have two- year tours at least for senior leaders rather than one-year tours and that they ought to be accompanied tours for as many officers as wanted to bring family members. In large measure this was because the one-year tour meant six months learning the job and six months packing out. The rotation was too destructive to effective continuity and Salvadorans only barely got to know and rarely trust somebody in that time. It worked.

My security detail I traveled with was one or two folks particularly when we went out by helicopter and in San Salvador a fairly elaborate convoy of four Chevrolet carry alls with armor. We changed our position in the convey from time to time We tried to vary routes and things and we were reasonably successful at that at least we didn't have anybody come after us while we were there.

While I was at the embassy we had several drive-by shootings, some of them pretty far away and some fairly close but we were obviously the target. We built a wall around the embassy as bomb protection because we were concerned about bombing attacks and the embassy had only an open fence. We built quite a heavy concrete wall with an outwardly curving surface to turn blasts outward to the extent that we could. We also, while I was there, we hung a stainless steel chain link fence as a screen from the balconies of the chancery building. The building had balconies all the way around it. It was about seven floors high and we hung the stainless steel chain link fence as a way to pre-detonate rocket launched grenades and rockets attacking the embassy. That was

easily installed. Subsequent, we had a fairly severe earthquake while I was there. That led to some cracking in the building. One of the judgments was that the weight of the chain link fence probably added to the stress on the outside of the building. After I left within, I think within nine months, they had a very severe earthquake in downtown San Salvador and the building was completely immobilized -- the old original seven-story building. In the meantime, we had built a large building for AID on the same area of ground, which was doing assistance programs. So the embassy had the option of squeezing into a new building. On several occasions we were fired on -- as I guess Winston Churchill once said, "That's fairly exhilarating if they don't hit you." I had one occasion in which I had a Senator from California who later became governor.

*Q: I want to say Wilson but I...*

PICKERING: It was, Senator Pete Wilson and Representative Sonny Montgomery from Mississippi from the House, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, with me when we were shot at on an election day by the guerrillas. This happened while we were flying around one of the volcanoes in El Salvador. We didn't get hit. When we landed I showed him one of military helicopters ahead of us that had taken a lot of bullet holes. They were ecstatic. They reported back immediately to their constituents that they had survived. I think it was good for at least one more re-election.

*Q: How did the election go? Did they have two elections, one for Duarte and one for the other fellow?*

PICKERING: I think that Duarte had a run off. Elections were difficult. They had a national electoral commission composed of the parties led by someone from one of the parties which had little prospect of winning the election. We spent a lot of time with them. We put a lot of effort into the elections because we thought they would be extremely important and I think indeed they were. One of the problems was getting registration. I thought they did a reasonably good job with that. Another was basically conducting free and fair elections and we observed that. As I said, the first time there was an election in my time there, we had 1,300 foreign observers so it was extremely interesting to the rest of the world. They used a solution of indelible ink that dyed people's skin blue or purple for a while so they couldn't vote again.

*Q: Infra red, you can take a look at it.*

PICKERING: Or this was just potassium permanganate or India ink or something that stayed on and which you couldn't wash off. I think that we recognized there would be a little hanky panky but there was not a lot of fraud. The ballots all had to be counted at each polling place and they were all subject to full observation by the watchers from each party and then each party got a copy of the tally. Each party could have an observer at each polling place and each observer could have a tally of the votes at each polling place. They couldn't easily change the totals on the way out to the central counting place or at the central tallying. I think generally speaking they were good. The exit polling was very strong. That was also closely aligned with the outcome so we had reasonable confidence that things were run pretty well. In the areas where there was heavy fighting what they generally did was to bring into the main town the polling places from

small towns around the capital of the province, close the main street, set them all up on the main street. It was like a national holiday and everybody could come in and vote.

*Q: This is Tape 9, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: We are talking about El Salvador and voting and I said that it was interesting in this first election to observe when I was there they had over an 80 percent turnout. It was very clear that folks, particularly poor campesinos in the countryside were frustrated. They wanted to use this as a way to determine that they had some voice in the outcome of where things were going. They preferred rather to vote rather than to listen to the people holding the guns on either side. They were patient; they stood in line when they had to for a long period of time. Very few were attacked by the guerrillas. The army was told that they couldn't vote and that they had to go out in the countryside and patrol and keep the guerrillas away from the voting places. They did a good job at it. I thought it was generally satisfactory.

It was interesting to me that if you asked me what were the most effective things we did I would say that among the two most effective things we did, including the military, were the elections -- a successive series of elections. They gave the people the sense that they could determine where the government was going and what it would do. And second, the land reform. It took place before I was there. The most important part of which was giving small holders control and ownership (less than 10 hectares, 22.5 acres) over the property that were renting. The reform had three parts: one was to break up large estates and that was not very effective in a sense they relied upon the campesinos, who worked the large estates, to take over the management and the operation. They kept the land together. It was clearly above the capability of the people who got the land to be able to manage working it effectively.

The second part was never carried out. That was land reform for areas under something like 400 hectares (1000 acres). They were very productive, they generally were very efficient, they constituted a significant part of the output of the country and they were not monopolistic in the sense that the very large, over 1,000 hectare estates were. The third was to give Campesinos who were renting land under ten hectares the opportunity immediately to own that land. They had to pay off the government in a very easy way over a ten year period. Based on their own success in farming the land they had no trouble doing that. The third part of the program covered a very large share of the campesino population of El Salvador. They were dependent on mainly subsistence agriculture. For the first time people had their own land. The system worked. These people suddenly had some reason to be grateful to a government and to be interested in stability rather than revolution. It made a big difference in rural campesino outlook toward the future of El Salvador.

*Q: What about the fourteen families?*

PICKERING: They were all mainly in Miami by the time I was there. There had been a wave of kidnappings by the guerrillas in San Salvador particularly among the wealth, not just the fourteen families, but many others. Some of them were fairly brutally treated. They didn't stay around. They went to Miami. Some of their offspring were around, but very few and they had been such a significant target that in fact they were driven to leave.

*Q: During the time you were there was there a significant flow of refugees or people fleeing from the battles and going up into Mexico and into the United States?*

PICKERING: Yes, it was hard to detect. The campesino population was trying to leave both as a result of over population and low or under employment, as a result of uncertainty -- whether it was guerrilla operations or death squad activities or the army marching around -- did not make it a very comfortable place to live particularly in the rural areas that were regularly contested. There were I think in all of that time a large number of people walking out of El Salvador, or riding out of El Salvador, through Guatemala and Mexico, and coming up to the United States. That accounts for the very large Salvadoran population in Los Angeles area, probably the second largest Salvadoran city in the world, and certainly here around Washington, DC.

*Q: Was the embassy called upon at any time to make judgments on these really political refugees or...?*

PICKERING: All the time and it was a great contest and it was always a big issue if any of these people were being deported. It was up to the local courts generally speaking, It was the human rights advocacy groups in the United States that took an active role in making the point in the court cases. Different judges ruled different ways. They were not necessarily going to be all treated the same way.

*Q: But was the embassy called upon to make judgments or did...?*

PICKERING: We did in our reporting make judgments about the degree to which military pressures opposed to economic conditions played a role. We tended to think given the limited nature over all of the military activity -- it wasn't a fighting front, it wasn't a kind of on-going series of military campaigns, there were areas where the government had control and areas where the guerrillas had control and there were areas that were contested, where things see-sawed back and forth. Generally speaking we thought that the people who had land and who had opportunities in those areas were unwilling lightly to abandon it if they felt they had a future. But often they would send children out, Sometimes they sent out other members of the family. There were a lot of pressures for Salvadorans to leave -- mixed reasons -- some political pressures as well from both sides. We still see that in the U.S. today where El Salvador continues to be next to Haiti the most densely populated country in the whole western hemisphere.

*Q: Turning around to the military again, were you monitoring what the School of the Americas, this is our military training establishment for Latin Americans, was this a concern?*

PICKERING: We followed that fairly carefully. We followed the curriculum even more. Prior to my time there, we had sent two or three heavy battalions of Salvadorans to the United States for training. These were really fairly big units, battalions of 1,200 men. They played a major role in Salvadoran military operations. At least one of them, the Atlacatl Battalion, had been tied up in a very bad series of village massacres. We did our best both in the Honduras training and the local training in El Salvador to do everything we could to promote rules of engagement, respect for human rights, and the rules of war. The military after these heavy battalions were formed, tended

to organize some lighter infantry battalions They were in size from 4-600 men, more mobile, lighter infantry, less heavy weapons. The training went ahead with those with lots of American instructors often out of the special forces in Honduras and then later inside El Salvador particularly when the Salvadorans had their own training establishments set up later on at La Union.

*Q: How well do you think you were observed by the intelligence apparatus? We're talking about the CIA and the Defense intelligence?*

PICKERING: Hard to really know. I think that we had very few if ever any indications of impending major guerrilla operations. There may have been a paucity of sources. Occasionally, they had a few breaks where they could swoop in and capture some guerrilla leaders. I suspect it was through signals intercepts and signals intelligence. I didn't think that we or the Salvadorans were necessarily well served in terms of military operations and to some extent it was even harder to understand what the extreme right was doing and where they would likely go. We had some sources, but not I think hugely adequate ones. One of the sources turned up in a plot against me at one point to which we all reacted.

*Q: In other words you were having to watch both your back and your front?*

PICKERING: Absolutely, you had to watch everything. You had to watch your friends and the friends of your friends and the enemies of your friends.

*Q: What about families there? I'm talking about American families and all.*

PICKERING: My wife was there. We had families because in a period when there hadn't been any families, it changed the complexion of the place fairly significantly. It became I think more like an animal house operation than a regularly operating embassy. Thus, I think bringing the families back helped. Very few people had kids but some had children in school. There was a very big international school in El Salvador. We did not have attacks on families or kidnappings while I was there, thank God. Shortly after I left, within three weeks after I left, four marines were killed. Unfortunately, they were eating in a downtown restaurant outdoors on a terrace in the Zona Rosa where they weren't supposed to be. It was a drive-by shooting. Obviously somebody had noticed they were there and brought in the drive-by shooters.

*Q: How did you see your relations with the State Department, were you getting mixed signals?*

PICKERING: It was one of the things that left me most concerned when I was first asked when I was in London to take the job. When I then came back to Washington and talked to George Shultz, we went over this very carefully. He told me what he thought we should be doing. I discussed what I thought we should be doing. We were in pretty close agreement. He brought in Tony Motley from Brazil at that time to be assistant secretary and I compared notes with Tony. I think we all saw things very much the same way. There was not a huge change from the way Tom Enders saw it. Craig Johnstone was the deputy assistant secretary and covered Central America. I worked very closely with Craig and with Tony throughout the whole period. On most occasions we saw eye to eye. There were very few occasions when we had issues or problems. I

think once or twice or three times Tony called me and was concerned about a particular issue -- that we weren't paying enough attention to this or that or there was a problem with what we were saying or doing. Usually it was something that we were pretty close to agreement on and got ourselves aligned without a lot of difficult. They were not issues I would consider as big issues. Craig was responsive in getting back to us on things were we needed help or sought advice.

We had good support from SOUTHCOM. George Shultz had an extremely strong view that we had to both fight the war and deal with the human rights issues -- that we had no way in which we could skimp on one and move for the other. We had a strong sense that we had to maintain and strengthen the military piece. But we also had this whole range of aid, of reform, of going after the violations of human rights, the murderers of Americans -- we couldn't afford to relax in any of those. I was totally engaged with and sympathetic with that approach. That was an approach that we stayed very much together on with the Department. I thought that even among the people that were seen to be the zealots at the National Security Council they stayed off our back. I believe we made progress on both fronts, military and civil. That helped us deal with these issues. I never had any problems with the press in talking about what we were doing. I never had a problem with Salvadorans. At least on things like death squad activities -- I gave them a very tough speech months after I was in El Salvador about the need to end the death squad violence and to deal with the civil society issues -- civil and human rights violations. Some Salvadorans didn't like it and some liked it. That is one of those things that it was an imperative obviously on which to stake out a very strong position.

*Q: How about Jesse Helms operation which was I guess almost unique operation particularly in Latin America?*

PICKERING: Well I think he had a very strong sense of what we should be doing which didn't match where we were going. His view was that we should be fully attached to the hard-right. They were the true anti-communists and that they represented the right vision for the future. His staff people came down and paid a lot of attention to the hard liners on the right. They sometimes came in to see us, not always. They often harassed us about our unwillingness or inability to accept hook line and sinker what the hard-line wanted. They thought we paid too much attention to the other elements of the political spectrum, the Christian Democrats, the campesino movements, labor unions and the other people who were also similarly engaged.

*Q: I think this is a good place to end.*

PICKERING: And his folks came down and participated in a fairly active way on the platforms in the election in favor of Roberto D'Aubuisson. That was not my idea where the U.S. ought to be. There was no way I could block that. He objected very strongly to our clandestine funding of the Christian Democrats during the Duarte elections.

*Q: Did Oliver North play any role while you were there?*

PICKERING: Yes, he came down frequently though to my knowledge none while I was there in terms of dealing with Salvadorans. He was always secretive about what he was doing, but seemed to focus on the Contras in the main.



*Q: He was just sort of a character out of the White House?*

PICKERING: Out of the White House, NSC staff guy with his own kind of views and approaches.

*Q: OK, well we will put at the end here...*

PICKERING: We ought to talk about Henry Kissinger's mission down there.

*Q: We will talk about Henry Kissinger's mission, conta...*

PICKERING: The Contadora process.

*Q: Contadora process and then we will move on.*

*Q: Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2005, the Ides of September.*

*Tom, two things. You were in El Salvador from when to when?*

PICKERING: I was in El Salvador from September of 1983 until July roughly of 1985.

*Q: You mentioned at the end there were two things you would like to talk about. One was the Henry Kissinger visit and the other was the of the Contadora process. What was the genesis and what happened to the Henry Kissinger visit?*

PICKERING: There was enough obvious criticism back and forth in U.S. policy on Central America that probably if I have my dates right, this can be checked, by 1984 where a number of things were going on including controversy about the policy the direction in which we should go. The administration asked Henry Kissinger if he would put together a commission to look into Central America and report back to the President...

*Q: Henry Kissinger, of course, is a private citizen at this point.*

PICKERING: Yes. It included some former military people and others, I haven't got the list of folks and my memory doesn't serve me well enough to remember recovery now the names of the members of the commission, but to look into U.S.-Central American policy and make recommendations to the administration. Essentially, in my exposure to it, it involved a visit to El Salvador and to other countries in the region led by Henry with a number of other individuals involved. Not only did they visit key Salvadorans, but I spent several hours or more with them discussing El Salvador -- responding to their questions, providing them briefings, giving them an overview of where things were going and giving them our recommendations on where policy should go.

At the end they came out with a report probably late '84, early '85 if my memory again serves me correctly. The report in general was I thought a strong support for the continuation of the

very complex effort that we were making at that time. That included basically military support where there were critical issues. In El Salvador of course there was limited American involvement because of legislative restrictions on the number of military advisors -- 55. In addition, there was a considerable amount of technical and monetary assistance to help these countries develop their own economies and social structure, their governance relationships -- all of which made sense in dealing with an insurgency of the type that was taking place in El Salvador. As I remember, there were few if any major new departures other than a reinforcement of the need to have Congressional support in providing aid. I can't remember because it was not a primary concern to me exactly what they said with respect to Nicaragua. That was highly controversial at the time. The presence of the Contras in Nicaragua and exactly what should be done there was part of the report recommendations. This all took place before the Ollie North revelations, the funneling of funding into the Contras brought out of Middle East arms sales to Iran via Israel that he conducted. That all came out about '86, but some of it was obviously going on earlier, although none of the policy issues that were discussed with the Commission as I recall touched on those questions or even approached those kinds of issues. The group was a balanced one and included I think some Congressional members or people with past Congressional experience. But it was a good process in terms of El Salvador which had been highly controversial because of the serious human rights violations on the part of the government, some of the government's own ineptitude with respect to creating and building a responsible military force as well as their slowness and being able to implement aid activities.

On the Contadora process, that was a long and drawn out effort. Harry Shlaudeman was the major negotiator on behalf of the secretary and the president when I was there. It involved a negotiation with a number of states parties including a number of Latin American states, with a lot of European interest. The name comes from a small island off the west coast of Panama where they actually met I think to begin some of the early work in thinking about setting it up. It was obviously geared to trying to try to find a way through to a negotiated solution for some or all of the Central American problems. Because of the highly divisive nature of the effort on our part, the significant sense of concern about the American role, and the part played by the left-wing elements in the hemisphere and in the regional polarization around the process it seemed to plagued it with unusual difficulties. Harry made valiant and admirable efforts to lead it forward - - to see if he could get something done. It became in a sense more of a distraction rather something that produced very much. Nevertheless, it was within the open framework of this on-going process. That Duarte's own efforts independently to open a negotiating front with the FMLN occurred. Finally, El Salvador negotiations bore fruit in the early '90s at the UN with the effort that the secretary general and Alvaro de Soto had undertaken. That comes at a later point I think in the oral history because it was one of the major things that took place at the UN when I was there.

*Q: In a way the Contadora process would you say acted at least if nothing else to engage countries which were outside sniping at the United States and say come on in and let's talk about it.*

PICKERING: It did a lot of things. It began to open up the notion that there was a multilateral negotiating solution to the problem rather than a unilateral, a U.S. backed and endorsed solution heavily buttressed by military force. While the bulk of the effort in terms of U.S. engagement

and indeed I think the bulk of the reason for our success came out of our own set of bilateral relationships with the states in the area -- including the ability to open up Nicaragua to future elections. The electoral process as well as the ability to support the Salvadoran government in holding off the guerrillas while it began to develop its own economy, were the principal reason why the process had some success. It had a damage limiting capability and it developed the opportunity to open up alternative channels. In the last analysis I think most of us thought were probably the way in which the problem would work out. Whether it was in multilateral negotiations under Contadora or bilateral internal Salvadoran negotiations is a different matter. But the fact of being able to open a negotiating track and make it respectable which it was not I think in the view of many of the ardent rightwing pro neo con Americans in the administration. For them it was a different story, but it had several values one of which you pointed out, it kept snipping down. Another was that it opened up a "legitimate" future channel for a negotiated solution. Thirdly, it gave the United States the ability to win broader public support internationally by being willing to talk and fight at the same time.

*Q: How did the extreme left, Cuba and Nicaragua, the Sandinistas, were they at least in some measure involved in this?*

PICKERING: They were. I think to some extent they tended to focus much more heavily on Nicaragua and its problems and issues.

*Q: So the Cubans through Mexico or something have...*

PICKERING: The Cubans never officially attended but others who did were in touch with the Cubans. As we know, Mexico had its problems with the Cubans as well as obviously interest. But an assumption that Mexico was somehow automatically complete and in as a foil for the Cubans was wrong. They had a lot of their own points of view and a lot of their own attitudes.

*Q: Just one more thing about Henry Kissinger. Kissinger during the time he was secretary of state and even before was renown by saying that Latin America was a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica, in other words he didn't appear to have much regard for events in Latin America. How did you find him in this process?*

PICKERING: I think at first what I would call the minimization of Henry's strategic interest in Latin America is both true and false in some ways. When I served with him briefly as executive secretary I noted the fact that even though he had a tendency as I think quite rightly he should have to give priority first to the Cold War which had an existential potential for impact on the United States, the hot war in Vietnam and then later he became interested in the Middle East in a very serious way particularly following the crossing of the canal in October 6 of 19...

*Q: '67.*

PICKERING: No.

*Q: No, no excuse me '73.*

PICKERING: 1973 or '72.

*Q: It was the Yom Kippur War then.*

PICKERING: The Yom Kippur War was in 1973. He also paid attention to Latin America, had friends there and stayed in touch with them

He later in his period of service as secretary of state spent a great deal of time in Africa and in Latin America. At the time that I got to know something about him, 1973 mainly, it had always impressed me that he had not only a strong interest in vacationing in Acapulco but a serious set of relationships with foreign ministers and others all across the Latin America. He took it seriously and cultivated it. This was true despite the fact that he may have in his heart of hearts felt that they were progenitors of fourth rank problems. As the administration went on, he got interested in some of these problems and in trying to resolve them and to bringing people into the Department who could by working with him become in effect valuable in working on his extended interests there.

*Q: You can always take a look at this and if there is anything else on El Salvador you can fill this in but we're moving to 1985.*

PICKERING: Yes, we are in 1985 and moving toward the summer of '85 when I left El Salvador and went to Israel.

*Q: Anybody who is nominated to be ambassador to Israel always undergoes tremendous vetting by political forces in the United States. Did you feel this?*

PICKERING: I didn't feel it so much as something new or unusual because I had served in Jordan earlier. When I got a phone call in the winter of '85, I suspect it was about February, from George Shultz to say that Sam Lewis was leaving Israel -- he would be leaving at some point. He asked would I be interested in going to take the post and of course I said, "Absolutely, I would be delighted." I had always thought it was place in which I would like to serve. I had a lot of interest in it. I had visited Israel several times before that but was not an Israeli aficionado in any sense of the word.

However, I said to George Shultz the obvious thing, "I was ambassador in Jordan for four and a half years. Have you taken care of that because it was likely to become an important consideration for some Israelis -- particularly since I would become the first American ambassador who had previously served as an ambassador in an Arab country to be seriously thought about for Israel. And I said, "You know, that's more than a trivial or trifling problem." He said, "No, no, we've been through all of that and we've talked to the Israeli's and they are comfortable." Shimon Peres was prime minister so I suspect that he had something to do with it. Shimon was not only open-minded about these things, interested in the peace process, but for most of my time there was very much interested in Jordan. For him, Jordan was the likely next possible peace partner for Israel. They had a long relationship with King Hussein and while it would be not a monumental opening, it could a useful one -- since Hussein might provide an indirect way of dealing with the Palestinians. So to repeat, he continued, "...we've already talked

with the Israeli's, that's been taken care of." I trusted his view that in taking care of the Israeli side of the equation, he had also pretty much taken care of the American side of the equation, that is that the Israelis signaled that they would be prepared to grant agreement.

Nevertheless, it was obviously my interest before completing my confirmation hearings to reach out widely in the US. That I did to develop contacts with the help of the desk and others in the very large, very ramified, very important American Jewish community, Some of this was with members of the Council of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations who are widely recognized across the community and have been for years seen as the preeminent community leadership on things Israeli-American. I had some contacts previously and spoke to APAC American Israeli Political Action Committee who were obviously very important especially on the Hill. I had the impression when I came back to develop these contacts that despite what a very unusual appointment this was, it not an appointment that was going to be widely contested. That was in part out of respect for Ronald Reagan and out of respect for George Shultz in particular and George's own connections. George, of course, himself had been through something of the same thing, if you remember. When Al Haig left and George was nominated, the American community in close touch with Israel began to assume that he would be the ambassador from Bechtel. Bechtel's considerable construction activities tended to be focused much more on the Arab side of the Jordan River, if I can phrase it that way diplomatically speaking. As a result George too went through this process long before I did. He went out of his way to build a relationship and establish strong relationships in Israel and made it very clear that Bechtel's own business interests were not going to control or indeed influence his own way of thinking. And indeed it was an interesting comment on my three and a half or more years in Israel, all while he was Secretary, that he did spend a lot of this time and effort doing two things: cementing and strengthening his contacts with Israelis across the board. Secondly, he built strong ties with the American Jewish community.

The former, was undertaken sometimes to the dismay of someone like Shimon Peres -- in a sense that he paid equal attention to both sides of the National Unity government which was then in power. He kept lines open to the Likud side of the house. He retained a particularly close relationship over the years with Moshe Arens who had served in the Likud in the defense minister and had an American period in his own background.

*Q: And been ambassador here.*

PICKERING: And been ambassador to the United States and understood us all very well. He stood strongly as a leader on the right -- a staunch defender of the Likud and could convey those views persuasively and confidently to someone like George Shultz.

That is a long answer to your question, but it is a very interesting and important one. Over my time in Israel I made it a point to go out of my way to meet, greet, talk, brief and be in touch with members of the community who came to visit. Generally speaking, I gave meeting them priority when Americans came. These were more often than not members of the American-Jewish community but not exclusively. I met with them, gave them briefings, talked about the situation in Israel and give them my assessment of the situation in the region.

Secondly, obviously highly controversial in Israel is how views and attitudes are conveyed. It is a society that highly values frank, plain speaking and direct straight from the shoulder talk among its own people, particularly among the Sabras (Hebrew for the prickly pear), those born in the country. However, Israelis generally do not seem equally to welcome that degree of directness and frankness from outsiders, and especially in public. It was obvious from the beginning that was the case so I worked to be on good diplomatic behavior except when I felt there had been serious mistakes made. Early on I made an effort to listen and to understand their point of view. I had obviously tried faithfully to represent the views of the United States and to talk to them about our efforts and to find ways to try to be helpful for the pursuit of peace. I made the peace process and the ongoing efforts there a central pivot, because it was then unassailable that anybody who was dedicated to finding a way to bring peace to the region on a basis that both sides would have to agree, could not be criticized. Support for peace efforts was also in my view an important differentiator. It helped to make clear that the U.S. was closer in this regard to Labor and the center left and center parties than it was to the Likud. But it was somewhat more subtle in that Likud would not also come out against the peace process itself despite differences over substance. They would only come out against the terms and conditions under which their opponents in Israel wanted to pursue that process.

*Q: When you went there or when you were back here you talked about Sam Lewis. He had been there for about seven or eight years?*

PICKERING: I think eight at least.

*Q: I think it was eight and I assume you had been in contact with him over the time in Jordan and all of that but did you have a good almost debriefing or time with him about his talking about things? Often our Foreign Service posts we pass like ships in the night.*

PICKERING: Let me say one other thing before that and then I will answer your question, which is an important question. There was one last shoe to drop on El Salvador and that was in my hearings for Israel. Senator Helms focused on the issue of El Salvador preeminently and on two incidents, one, a personal one, and one more official played a role in that process which I think are worthwhile mentioning. At that time Bill Brownfield, who has now been ambassador to Chile and is in Venezuela (Currently, 2015, Assistant Secretary for INL -- "drugs and thugs" in State) a particularly tough post at the present time. He was the lead on the desk on El Salvador. And as is his want, after my open hearings and exactly on the eve -late Wednesday -- of a Thursday morning meeting of a committee at which votes were to be taken on the nominees, Senator Helms submitted a list of something like 250 plus questions to be responded to -- all on El Salvador. Bill got them because they came through the official channels before I had them and called me immediately. I said, "Bill I will drop everything and come by and sit down with you and we'll put the answers together in the Department and I hope to get the vote out tomorrow morning." He said, "It's OK Tom, I think that all of these are straight forward, all of these I can answer and I will be glad to put these all together and I'll take them up myself, hand deliver them to the committee on Thursday morning," And Bill did. Bill stayed up all night with this. It was absolutely a Herculean effort and Bill did a beautiful job because all objections were removed and the process went ahead.

Prior to that and as part of the ongoing process after or maybe, probably after my open hearings on Israel, Senator Helms said that he had just a few things he wanted to talk to me about. I went up and he conducted a private hearing on El Salvador that had two separate sessions that went to -- to each one of which he devoted a couple of hours. I was the only witness. I think he was the only member present along with members of his staff, but it was a part of the ongoing hearings for Israel. He was then Committee Chairman (Senate Foreign Relations). I believe that a record was made and interestingly he had a long series of questions. I think staff accompanied him but he actually ran the hearing and the questions covered almost every aspect of anything that had happened in El Salvador in my years there. Obviously, the discussion was not what one would call remarkably friendly but it was not disagreeable. In a sense the questions themselves were based obviously on staff knowledge and so were quite good. They were very pointed. They sought to bring out failures for which the administration or I might be responsible. After all we have to remember that this was a Republican administration and a Republican Senator although I don't think that he walked delicately through that maze. The interesting thing was that I was at a remarkable advantage I felt in that set of hearings -- in those sets of discussions -- because everything had taken place on my watch. They were all things with which I was intimately familiar. They were all questions we had to wrestle with from a policy and an operational perspective. I believe I was able to give satisfactory answers and of course he was at a disadvantage because he was not in a position to do all the necessary follow up questioning that I think would have come out had somebody been intimately involved in this process on his side of the table. That would not have changed the result, but the record would have been more complete and thorough. It's an interesting comment on the confirmation process. The Senators have their own limitations with respect to how far they can or want to go on a set of follow up questions, particularly if they are examining someone going out to a new post on their past post.

Sam had been in Israel I think for part of my last years in Jordan, '76-'78. This was now '85 so he had been there at least a good eight years, almost rivaling Wally Barbour who was our fifth ambassador to Israel and who actually stayed twelve. Sam was intimately part of the Israeli scene as a result, completely knowledgeable. Sam and I had arranged several occasions to meet around my time in preparing for hearings. He had given me very thorough fill-ins and background which was supplemented obviously by the desk and the reading in material. Because I had been involved and very busy in a kind of near hot war situation in El Salvador, his and the desk's being able to fill in all of the gaps was remarkably useful. But it also was obviously hindered by the fact that Sam for most of this time was in Israel and I was in El Salvador, until I broke loose. So time was limited.

I forget how much time the Tel Aviv embassy was then in the charge of the DCM who was Robert Flatin. Actually Robert and I by pure coincidence or accident went to our first post together on the old SS America to Europe. He was going to Strasburg and I was going to my first overseas assignment in Geneva. We had a chance to get to know each other and so did our families on the boat and actually had visited each other while we were in Europe. I knew Robert fairly well from that period of time. He was also, when I got there, remarkably helpful and useful. He had served in Israel previously and gave me a feel for his take on individuals, on sensitivities, on things to do and not to do. Sam had given me probably more than what I would have considered to be possible in the usual way of what I would call non-turnover turnover of

American ambassadors interested in getting off to vacation or their next post or retirement, but that's my own optic, I think Sam's was unusually generous in that regard.

*Q: There is a certain fault in that I hope maybe these oral histories in time may fill in some of this. A lack of historical perspective each when we go to a new post we often don't really talk as much to the people who have been there before as we should.*

PICKERING: I think that the confirmation process serves another useful purpose and that's to allow the appointee being confirmed at least sometimes to have the time to read in well because the Senate is slow in getting to these appointments, even if they are being rushed to a post. This allows you to spend time with the desk, with the U.S. government bureaucracy to the greatest extent you can with non-governmental figures on the issues. You have to be a little careful about doing the Hill and some administrations have different views than others that you owe your first word to the Senate. This is undoubtedly true, but you don't have to go around providing opinions, you can go around asking questions and pursuing issues with individuals. Some are quite anxious to see you particularly before you are confirmed. I think that it's a very useful time. Secondly, having done this I guess being confirmed for ambassador ships seven times and for other posts another three or four, you get to learn how to learn on the job. I think that it grows on you and you develop a routine and you also are able to take experience from one place to another. Those approaches can help you begin to figure out who to ask what questions and what kind of questions to pose. They can help you to begin to ask how to figure out to whom to ask what questions as well as to understand certain paradigms of behavior. Politics is not so uniquely local that there aren't actually interesting commonalities. So beginning to fit those pieces in place allows you to take the pieces of one puzzle and begin to see that the colors may be the same even if the shapes are different. But that helps you find a path through the maze. Learning on the job often involves being thrown into deep water each time with no life raft, no buoy, no good way of swimming. I think that having done it in the past helps you quickly get on in the future.

*Q: Before you went out, you are going to be dealing with delegations, groups, and individuals particularly the Jewish community. They play an almost key role in our involvement in that part of the world. What was your sort of evaluation of where would these different groups coming from? Was there a theme, was it overly diverse or how did you find the Jewish community?*

PICKERING: I would say remarkably diverse with respect to specifics and details, but unified strongly on the basic proposition that we should support Israel and that we were committed to Israel's defense and survival as we were committed to a peace process to ensure that. So those were basically widely shared philosophical postures if you like on the part of the American Jewish community, postures that were widely accepted.

Secondly I had had some significant relations with this community interestingly enough as ambassador to Jordan, sometimes in opposition and sometimes in support depending upon the set of issues. So I was not without contacts. Also, many members of Congress who are also deeply involved in the Middle East, had visited me in El Salvador, and they were still also equally interested in El Salvador, so I had in a sense more than a personal acquaintance with many of them and given the new job, and was able to use those contacts to get to them to see me. Many of



them, with the new American ambassador to Israel, made it a point themselves to come by and see me or to ask me to come and see them. I made no public statements before the Senate hearings. The administration is not overly prissy about to whom I should talk before I went on the Hill, as long as I was careful about supporting the administration policy and listening rather than expressing views.

*Q: When you went out there, this would be '85?*

PICKERING: '85, yes.

*Q: What was the situation in Israel and its neighborhood?*

PICKERING: I'm trying to figure out what my timing was; I used to know all these exactly by the date. I came back from El Salvador I think in July; it escapes me as to when I got out in Israel. Something will ring a bell but certainly maybe by Labor Day or sometime around then. The situation was that Camp David had run its course. The Peace Treaty with Egypt was in place. Israel had been in '82 through an invasion of Lebanon that had for all intents and purposes succeeded in getting Arafat out of Beirut and to Tunis with the help of the international community. But it backfired badly in creating a lot of destruction and havoc in Beirut, obviously led with Sharon's own involvement to the Sabra and Shatila massacre of Palestinians by the right wing Lebanese Phalange factions under the eye of the Israeli armed forces -- with what was obviously from the Israeli point of view a wink and a nod. Then the withdrawal of Israeli forces took place much closer to the Israeli border -- to about where they stayed until the Israeli's completed their withdrawal just a few years ago. At the same time, it led to some serious losses of Israeli troops and without a lot of ability to push forward the peace process. The Israelis had in their custody lots of Lebanese, Palestinians and others picked up in the process. Confrontation remained high. But at least the Labor side of the National Unity Government, Peres was Prime Minister for the first half of the four year term, was interested in pushing ahead with a peace settlement and it became more intense about six or eight months before I arrived.

*Q: This is Likud and Labor?*

PICKERING: Likud and Labor together in a "national unity government", with the Labor serving the first years as prime minister and that was Peres, followed by Shamir. Shamir was foreign minister while Peres was prime minister and they reversed roles halfway through. Yitzhak Robin remained defense minister throughout it all. He didn't shift roles. There was no election in between; the parliament -- the Knesset -- stayed the same. Other members of the cabinet shifted in between but it was still a national unity cabinet, even if the leadership and membership shifted. The Likud were a lot more skeptical any peace process and the compromises needed to get there.

There was a side show going on that occupied a lot of effort and that was the status of a square mile piece of territory just south of what is now the Israeli-Egyptian border on the northeast edge of the Sinai along the Gulf of Aqaba called Taba. It had a modern Sheraton hotel in the middle of the territory. The Israelis, particularly Mr. Sharon, insisted had always been part of the British mandate of Palestine and therefore was undoubtedly Israeli territory. The Egyptians knew for

certain it was their territory. It was resolved after a long and difficult negotiation leading to an international arbitration which brought about the return of the territory to Egypt much later. The negotiation leading to the arbitration were deeply engaged, but without much progress during my service in Tel Aviv.

Israel had suffered extremely high inflation in part leading I think to the establishment of the national unity government. Under Peres' leadership, Israel was engaged in very painful steps to deal with the very high inflation and the Israeli shekel at that point had gone to over a thousand to one dollar. At the initiative of George Shultz a small group of three distinguished economists was assembled to provide private advice to Peres. It included Herb Stein and Stanley Fischer who later went on to be deputy at the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and now interestingly enough has gone to Israel to be governor of the Israeli Central Bank, He was a prominent economist of South Rhodesian (Zimbabwe) origin who had also come to the United States. I forget who the other was They were an independent brains trust to help advise Peres. I found it fascinating, they were all very interesting, all very wise heads and I learned a lot about international and domestic economics from them. Not only that they were kind enough to talk with me frequently and to be available to me as well as to come out to Israel to talk with Peres and his team. They helped to turn around the economic situation in about a year or less. A good bit had already been accomplished before I arrived there.

*Q: Where did Likud fit? Labor, I assume was sort of the European socialist model and...*

PICKERING: It was and they found it hard to do things like privatization. Likud was more open, more willing to embrace what we would call more capitalist, more open market economic approaches. They had not been a long time in office, so therefore hadn't enjoyed some of the benefits to the party of what the socialist scheme of things tended to provide. By the time we got there, Peres had already in the cabinet agreed on and instituted a number of measures. The galloping rate of inflation was coming down, but things were still heavily denominated in dollars rather than shekels to give some stability in prices and salaries, and people rarely if ever acquired very large numbers of shekels because they were certain that what was the value today would go down tomorrow. That was gradually brought around and over a period of a year, the Israeli's did the usual things to stabilize the exchange rate and stop inflation. They eventually introduced a new shekel and dropped three zeros off the old one.

*Q: Sharon, in the first place what did Sam Lewis tell you about Sharon and what was you might say what was the Department attitude toward Sharon?*

PICKERING: Sam would I think be best to speak himself, but Sam emphasized that he saw Sharon as someone who still was in the game despite his responsibility for Sabra and Shatila and a commission's findings in that regard. I accepted that, although Sharon was certainly marginalized. That's an interesting point because it has something to do with events today in a more up to date way with Sharon back as Prime Minister. We talked about all of the political factors and Sharon did not necessarily importantly stand out, but let me tell you two stories that I think are interesting.

One is a precursor story, which I had had in my head for some time. During the Egyptian disengagement negotiations and I probably have mentioned this so it is elsewhere in the tape but it is interesting to recall. In one of the trips back from Egypt to Israel near the end of the first disengagement negotiations in January of '74 when I accompanied Kissinger, we were all invited by Moshe Dayan to his house. It was, by Israeli standards, not modest although we might have considered it modest by US standards. It was located in the military suburb of Tel Aviv called Zahala. He had a wonderful garden full of all kinds of antiquities and a museum. The most interesting thing was another antiquity at the party. There was an old gentleman, bald, sitting in the corner and Moshe Dayan happened to be with Henry at the moment and came over and asked Henry and me to go meet what he characterized as now "the biggest political has been" in Israel, it was Menachem Begin who later became as you know the prime minister and negotiated at Camp David. So Sharon's being out at that point was not necessarily an immutable factor in Israeli internal politics!

I was aware that renaissances are possible in Israel, which leads to the second story. Early on in my time there I went around to meet people. The issue of speaking with Ariel Sharon came up and I said to everybody, "I always wanted to meet him. I heard he was an interesting guy and," I said "besides I think that I ought to reach out to all Israeli's no matter how controversial. But I will draw the line at Rabbi Meir Kahane."

*Q: This is the Jewish Defense League man.*

PICKERING: A man who was later assassinated across the street from the Waldorf Hotel in New York before I got to New York.

I called Sharon and he was certainly willing to see me. He was then a minister of industry and trade. He had an office in an old Turkish hotel right next door to our consulate general in West Jerusalem on the Israeli side on Agron Road. It was easy to see him and we met in his office, a very nice office in this Ottoman period hotel. He spent an hour or two with me and showed me all his maps of the West Bank with plans for new settlements. We talked about all of his plans for the West Bank, how he was going to build roads here and there, how in effect he was going to populate all of the West Bank with these major settlements and this was going to be facts on the ground, which were going to make a Palestinian state impossible. I argued then on the other side of the case and that this was not in Israel's interest to get involved in all of this. Israel could not stay Jewish and democratic if this happened. It was contrary to international law. This was the first of a number of discussions. I'd go by and see him every three or four months. Despite our differences, he was kind enough to invite my wife and me down to his farm on occasion. His wife, Lily, who was really a wonderful woman, still alive and we had a chance to meet and get to know her before she died. Sharon was always an interesting character; he was open, gregarious, interested, argumentative, opinionated, determined, stubborn, difficult, friendly -- all of those things at once.

The most interesting vignette that I took away from these meetings and it was something that I put into one of my end of tour cables in 1988, was that frequently on these meetings, not every time but frequently, even when we were not totally alone and often when he had a staffer or two in the meetings he would lead me to the door of this large office and he would say, "Remember

ambassador I'm going to be prime minister of this country and when I get to be prime minister I'm going to resolve this problem with the Palestinians." He didn't tell me exactly how but I'd always remembered that because he had said it so often that it was obviously something very much on his mind.

There was of course a reason why it was difficult to see Sharon at this time -- because of his association with Sabra Shatila. Prior to my arrival there had been a report of Israel's own internal investigation which was anything but a white wash of Sharon. Everything he had seen and done and everything that he'd said then and subsequently has tended to strengthen his hard line approach. The interesting thing was I saw him last November, November 2004, when I was in Israel. When I visit, I would go by to call. He enough remembered my meetings with him enough to be willing to give me a meeting. But in November 2004, he insisted that he was going to get out of Gaza and he insisted that he would work hard -- Arafat had then died -- to help Mahmoud Abbas -- Abu Mazen -- in his quest for election as leader of the Palestinian Authority (al Fatah in effect). He would handle the Palestinian elections in every way that would keep any taint of Israeli interference out of them, but he would do what he could quietly to see that they went off well and Abu Mahzen got elected. I said to myself mentally, "Well, this was not the old Arik Sharon, this is very interesting." But I felt the test in my view to be whether as this process goes ahead, as inevitably will be the case, how will he chose between being leader of the Likud party and keeping the party with him on one hand and develop a Palestinian state on the other.

Now he's in an interesting position where he is the most popular politician in Israel as we speak. He will face an election this year or next, most likely next. His party is against him except for maybe a third that's left. Bibi Netanyahu, his old nemesis has already declared himself, thrown his hat in the ring and will go into the Likud primary. Sharon now faces the question of how to run his prime ministership where he is undoubtedly going to be elected. He can't very well change the game at this stage given where he is electorally. I think he wants to go toward some kind of negotiated effort. He is now polishing his reputation for that. He's made clear to me that he doesn't think as many people do that Israel can stay Jewish and democratic and continue at the same time to occupy the Palestinian territories. (Sharon was elected, suffered a serious and incapacitating stroke and died "dealing with the Palestinian problem" 2015).

*Q: On the West Bank, first place, just put in context Hussein had already given up title to the West Bank at this time?*

PICKERING: That happened when I was in Jordan in '74 at the Rabat Summit meeting. Hussein went in thinking he had everybody lined up including Sadat to support him and he came back with no support and the Palestinians were ratified by the Arab League leaders as the partner for Israel in any negotiated settlement of the West Bank. They were also designated by the Arab world as the heirs of and leaders of Palestinian people and heirs to the territories in the occupied territories -- West bank and Gaza.

*Q: What was going on in the West Bank at that time? What were the Israeli's doing and what were the West Bankers doing?*

PICKERING: By in '85, we were still living in the period of what I would call semi-benign occupation. The refugee camps that had existed even under the Jordanians because they held the '48 refugees who had come over to the West Bank, were still there. Some of them had been evacuated in '67 but not many. The camps were still horrible places to live and some of them known centers of Palestinian militants. I can tell you that my wife and I, with Israeli license plates, alone in our car went all over the West Bank in our interest in visiting archeological sites and wandering over the countryside. We met and spoke with local people with no real problems at all. I don't think I was a widely known personality, the Palestinians didn't read the Hebrew press or the Israeli English press where my picture might have appeared. I had no guards, no escorts, no weapons -- nothing. That was in '85 and '86. I would go fairly frequently to see people like Elias Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem, whom I had gotten to know while I was in Jordan -- often while waiting to see King Hussein sitting in his waiting room talking to other visitors. Freij was kind enough to give me dinner, which was unusual in Bethlehem for the American Ambassador in Tel Aviv, with a group of his friends one evening. Relationships were reasonably good.

The Palestinians were not happy under occupation. The Israeli's did things to toughen it up from time to time. Increasingly one saw incidents that took place where I would have to say the Israeli occupation was not shown in the best light. I have to tell you that many Israeli's have had a kind of tin ear for the Palestinians and what to do. A few others were excellent -- well tuned in. My own friend Efraim Sneh, who was a military doctor and then an administrator for the territories had a pretty good listening ear for Palestinians, but in general if people could do dumb things, they would. It was a part insecurities and uncertainties among Israelis. Clinton Bailey was another, a real expert on Bedouin life in the region. In part, it was because they believed they had to maintain a strong security presence otherwise things would get out of hand. Over a period of time they would divide their country politically over the right wing zealots efforts to build more settlements, increase territorial confiscation and in fact use every element of the law and legal fiction to take territory away from Palestinians. They used British occupation law and British authorities that had been used against them to do this, which is the reason why you've got 285 thousand settlers and a lot of settlements, spread out in the West Bank and Gaza.(2015, upwards of 600000 mainly close to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem).

This led me to believe by the middle of 1987 that inevitably there was no way to take the heat off the pressure cooker and that the valve was lashed down and that things would begin to come apart. I gave a speech in May of that year at Hebrew University with the full clearance of State Department. I knew in Israel in particular that the occupation regime was a hot subject, but I said in effect in as nice words as I could that if Israel did not pay any more attention to how it was dealing with and treating Palestinians there would be a blow up. Well, I was more prescient than I thought. By December 1987 the first Palestinian intifada, the revolt of stone throwing, had broken out in the West Bank. A hard line right wing parliamentarian who is now also in the running for leadership of the Likud Party, Uzi Landau, called me the unfriendly ambassador of a friendly country. That was about as bad as I was able to polarize Israeli society with my statement. I considered, coming from him, in a backhanded way as a kind of compliment. Others told me quietly they appreciated the stand I had taken. The intifada changed my ability to go to the West Bank alone and it changed Israeli-Palestinian relations. The Palestinians were basically saying to themselves we're getting nowhere by being reasonable, docile occupied people. It was

interesting that young people among the Palestinians showed the way because they were willing to throw stones. In the end al Fatah adopted the young boy's way of protesting -- the adults too threw stones, shut down shops, boarded windows up, built barricades in the roads and burned tires, none of it terribly threatening except essentially to law and order. (Unfortunately, the failure on all sides widely to take into account the 'intifada of stones' in 1987, led a few years later to an 'intifada of bullets', which further increased the agony and polarization).

So that was an evolution, it was an evolution of increased confrontation over deepening frustration.

*Q: Did we have a policy about settlements when you got there?*

PICKERING: Sure we had policy on that; we had many policies there.

*Q: You want a policy we will give you a policy.*

PICKERING: It was a policy that had been modified, I think, by Ronald Reagan himself who at one point had been asked about settlements. Up to that time we had insisted that settlements were illegal. Herb Hansell as legal advisor at State had written the legal opinion that they were illegal. That opinion has never been reviewed or re-written and still stands. So Ronald Reagan in a fit of human kindness I suppose, provided a new expression, which didn't quite go that far -- the settlements were illegitimate! So in fact we had some of the props knocked out from under our legally-based policy, which had no teeth anyway, in a sense that we were not in a position politically to stop settlements -- then or now.

But it led to something that was interesting. While I was at the UN and after my time in Israel you remember there was the big standoff between George Bush and Yitzhak Shamir over the issue of whether in fact U.S. aid money should be used even to guarantee loans that might provide assistance to Israelis settling on the West Bank. The Israelis were very generous in providing settlers with money, very generous in building houses, extremely assiduous in doing this, and this in large majority was because the ministries supporting this activity were mostly under the control of the supporters of settlements. The political cost of reining them in was the political cost of shaking the existing coalition in Israel. So settlement expansion went on quietly, there was very little publicity. Before this we had taken a look through our ability to look from satellites at what was going on and we saw the growth and build up of settlements and kept track of it, talked to the Israelis about it but accomplished nothing.

*Q: I think one of the things was at some point that we were seeing settlements going up but not many people living in them. I mean these were sort of ...*

PICKERING: Oh yes, I agree, often houses were built waiting for people to come. The other ironic point of course was most if not all the labor building all of the settlements came from the occupied territories.

*Q: When you got there, first place did you find yourself with a unified embassy? This is a very controversial...what to do about the Left Bank, is Israel going to be a true democracy and they have a growing Arab population and all that?*

PICKERING: It's the West Bank, the Left Bank is in Paris and...

*Q: I guess I want to go back there and find...*

PICKERING: And find conditions for the Right Bank, if you use a standard geographical approach. The embassy I thought as I got to know it and talk with people found itself reasonably comfortable. I did not have a lot of backlash. Now, to some extent we were beginning what I would call with my appointment, and the appointment of a few others, a process of getting people to work both sides of this conflict. So we had begun a process that I would call a deep engagement. Interestingly enough two former DCMs in Tel Aviv had served both as my immediate successor and then my successor after that as ambassadors to Jordan, Nick Veliotis and Dick Viets. Nick later went on to serve as ambassador to Egypt and Assistant Secretary for the region and he and I overlapped a bit. So it was not in that sense a totally unheard of proposition, but as I remember the people who were then working in Israel I think that Molly Williamson had both Arabic and Hebrew in the political section and had actually worked in Jordan. Dan Kurtzer who later went to Egypt as ambassador may have already served once in Egypt before he came. He had both languages. I had people who were familiar with both sides of the issue; some of them had both languages.

*Q: Prior to that or if you served in an Arab country you couldn't serve in Israel or vice versa, at least...*

PICKERING: Yes, if you had served in Israel it was hard to go to the Arab world and if you had served in the Arab world it was sometimes hard to go to Israel. It was an element of internal false polarization that I think had begun to break down. I thought it was good that it was breaking down; it was opportune and advantageous to see things from both sides. In my case, it began what I call the 'schizophrenics society', the American ambassadors in Israel who had served in the Arab world. I don't think any American ambassador to Israel has later been an ambassador to an Arab country, no not yet. It's always worked the other way. But I think it has been a useful and good thing -- Peres told me he welcomed it, He wanted somebody who knew Hussein, who could give them insights, thoughts and advice on Jordan and how to deal with Jordan. I was not an official advisor to the Israeli's, but was happy to be helpful in bringing along a peace process.

Throughout my time, Peres was totally dedicated to see if he could find some breakthrough in the Peace Process. It wasn't that the Israeli's were all comfortable with this; obviously he was not where Shamir was. They had their biggest disagreements over the Taba negotiations which were only emblematically of what their differences were about -- giving up any land. Peres continued to take advantage of an opportunity to have meetings with Hussein which were conducted secretly. Some people knew about these, not widely. They didn't know the details; this set of activities led to a larger, but quiet effort. Dick Murphy was assistant secretary and Dick got us together, that is it was Paul Boeker, in Jordan for part of that time and later Rocky Suddarth, Nick and Frank Wisner from Egypt, Wat Cluverius who had been consul general in

Jerusalem. We would meet in places like London or elsewhere, Dick would always come out. We would sit down and talk about what would be our next steps; how could we get things started. The issue there was always how can we get Arabs to talk to Israelis. The Israelis were presumed under Peres generally to be willing. And even more difficult, how could we factor the Palestinians into the equation? Jordan was still very much in the minds of Israelis like Peres and the people around him. Unfortunately, they were so far behind the Arab political conclusions that it was not clearly going to work, although Hussein may have been willing, but only with wide scale support from the US and the key Arab states. Indeed to the extent that they thought about it on the Jordanian side, the US was a sine qua non, without US back there would be little or no chance of gaining Arab support.

The next key question was always on the Arab side: who would represent the Palestinians? We were not ready to talk to the PLO then nor were the Israelis. We were not ready to get the PLO itself involved and the Arabs were not ready to distance themselves from the PLO. It was very true that Hussein wanted to find a formula and he very much wanted to play a role. I think this was not as is often suspected an effort surreptitiously to regain Arab support for control of the West Bank, although over the years he and the Jordanians have all felt that in the end there would have to be a very close relationship between Jordan, a new Palestinian state and Israel. I suspect that there are economic and other reasons that still make that in the long term a viable proposition. But there remained deep PLO suspicions that this was only an effort to exclude them and bring in the Jordanians to speak for them and more. Hussein was very sensitive to these points and had resigned himself to the reality that working alone and with Peres without the US things had not a chance of moving toward Jordan. There were many formulas over who could speak for the Palestinians; would the PLO get permission, never, because the U.S. wasn't talking to them. We spent a lot of time having to deal with that. I can remember one long talk I had with I think Frank Wisner walking along the street in London where I said, "It's not in my interest to say this but if you ask me as an analyst and not as the American ambassador to Israel I think we are going to have to figure out a way to talk to Arafat one of these days."

*Q: I'm just wondering, were you given the Israeli's almost a veto over...and this almost not like recognizing communist China.*

PICKERING: But on the other hand we had all of the same problems. We had to get through with recognizing Communist China. We'd had American diplomats killed by the PLO -- targeted, murdered in Sudan and in Beirut. We had serious difficulties with them. On the other hand, our intelligence people obviously ran sources in and out of their organization -- so they had their contacts. We had talks with many people who one way or another were not recognized PLO officials, but were deeply supportive of and totally engaged with them. This changed later and over a period of time we would even be able to bring senior leaders others to meet with them once they had agreed to meet the conditions.

The consulate general in Jerusalem developed over a period of time a very broad range of contacts among Palestinians in the West Bank. It was an interesting idiosyncrasy. I had responsibilities for relations in Gaza. So I and my embassy would go and see the people in Gaza. But Wat Cluverius, the consul general in Jerusalem had the West Bank, and he and I had known each other for a long period of time and there was always...



*Q: Wat Cluverius.*

PICKERING: this traditional tension between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv We agreed that “we have enough problems in the region without making silly ones for ourselves.” Dick’s meetings with the ambassadors and the rest of us opened the door. I said to Wat, “You have to report the things the way they are, I’m not going to get into a battle over how you report. But if you’ve got something that’s new and different, please give me a heads up. I will try to do the same with you over Gaza. We will all be on each other’s circuit and we will try to find the places where both sides agree, rather than to fight their battles for them in the cable wars at the State Department.” I said to Wat, “If you need my help anywhere let me know”. He said, “Can we go to Gaza?” I said, “Of course, you can go to Gaza. Let me know when so I’m not surprised.” I said, “I want to talk to people on the West Bank and I will let you know.” I sat in occasionally in meetings up at the consulate general when the secretary came in to talk to the Palestinians. Many of them I knew from my time in Jordan. They were people that I had associated with and could talk with and that worked out pretty well so we kind of ended some of the internal U.S. strife between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem -- at least for a time.

A big effort was made by Peres to open talks with the Palestinians through the Jordanians in April of '87. It was the result of a meeting set up in London where he met the King. He had come forward with a formula for starting conversations and felt that he had sold the King on this formula. The King was a little more reticent about what it was that he had agreed to accept. Peres came back and he had Yossi Belen call me and say that he had this formula, he felt that he had gotten a real breakthrough and he wanted to start talks. I said it looked good to me if that was really where the Jordanians were. I sent it back to George Shultz with a strong recommendation of support. Peres’ problem was he had sold everybody, but his own colleagues in his coalition government from the other side of the coalition in Likud. He apparently hadn’t briefed them on what he was doing exactly, so this was a total surprise to them. Here he was depending on the U.S. to weigh in and make it happen. So you can imagine Shamir got his nose out of joint and the first thing he did was send Misha Arens to go talk to George Shultz and Charlie Hill who was then working as George’s executive assistant and had been many years in Israel. Charlie was a convenient contact for them always to feed in their side of the story. Well that was easy and George of course would always see Misha if he came. So Misha apparently put down a very tough marker. Peres, in the meanwhile, was depending on my diplomacy and George Shultz’ sympathy for being able in effect to get the Likud to accept the deal. The U.S. had been in favor of moving in this direction. Well Secretary Shultz was not willing to get between both halves of the national unity Government on the question. He said this back to Peres is your baby you have to handle it. He wasn’t totally negative on the thing but at the same time he said obviously this is something Israel will have to make up their own mind about how to move ahead. The U.S. was not in a strong position to resolve it. My own view was that had we come out strongly in favor of this, we possibly could have been more helpful with both Hussein and Peres in getting it launched, But there were problems on Hussein’s side of finding a way to speak for the Palestinians. And once there were problems on Peres side, it became apparent that it wasn’t going to work. (Peres has remained unhappy with what he considers to be a failure of American support at this critical time).

Over a period of time the various Ambassadors under Dick Murphy's lead began to take on with Shultz the need to open up with the Palestinians. We started a process and I guess sometime in '88 we had indicated that we would have contacts because they met the conditions we set out -- no more violence, willingness to deal with and eventually recognize Israel and so on. Bob Pelletreau was in Tunis and Bob was chosen to open contacts since the PLO was headquartered there. Then the PLO did something, I can't remember what it was, that was truly stupid and we cut them off for a while. At the time of the original decision to contact the PLO, I was asked to inform Mr. Shamir very late one evening. He was then prime minister after the national unity government shifted. I was to tell him the news that the United States was about to start conversations on a very limited basis at the level of our ambassador in Tunis with the PLO Palestinians based on satisfactory assurances that they had met the conditions. Shamir, I called him on the phone, said, "Well, you will very much regret this, this is a terrible mistake and how could you obviously think that this will help." I said, "Well we had signaled to him, as we had, ahead of time that this might be a possibility and that it wasn't totally new. We wanted him to continue to know that our commitment to Israel was unchanged and we would continue try to move things through positively."

Of course, that was the beginning of one of the radical changes in the region. I thought in the end it was the right thing to do despite the fact that if anything, the Israeli's and the Jordanians themselves had a similar very negative view of the Palestinian leadership, particularly Mr. Arafat -- the Jordanians coming out of their experience in the early '70s during Black September. Each distrusted him and felt he would not work for an agreement they could accept.

*Q: Well Arafat remained a problem actually throughout his life.*

PICKERING: I had said in smaller groups that Mr. Arafat's greatest contribution to the Peace Process was his leaving of it. On the other hand, I have some sense because there is balance in this question, that over the years both we and the Arabs managed one way or another always to reward Arafat. The Israeli's were in the forefront of doing this by making him a martyr or a potential martyr, if you like, within his own society. Every time he did something we didn't like, and that was more often than not, such as being unwilling to go ahead with an initiative that we had ginned up to get the Peace Process off and running often without his direct involvement, he would reap the benefit among his own people of being against the ideas. Often this came where he would have difficulties in managing things with his deputies and he said no. He emerged out of that a larger hero to his own people, a bigger more monumental figure than before. So, in a sense you could always say that he was rewarded in part by procrastination and by failure to make decisions. There was a famous phrase about him that has later been generalized to the Palestinians themselves -- somewhat unfairly -- that 'he never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity', it is often attributed to Aya Eban. In fact I believe I heard first well before I had met and worked with Eban from Zaid Rifai who was then prime minister of Jordan.

*Q: This is Tape 10, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

*Tom what about with Gaza? What was the relationship? Was Gaza under our embassy or where did Gaza fit?*

PICKERING: Gaza was looked after by the embassy while the West Bank was looked after by the consulate general in Jerusalem. I had nothing to do with setting it up that way. I think it was set up that way in part because it was easier for transportation. The embassy was closer to Gaza. And I suspect maybe whoever was the ambassador at whatever time it was worked out didn't want to entirely give it up. It had been previously from 1948-67 an Egyptian occupied area of the former mandate of Palestine. So the embassy administered the AID programs that had been developed for Gaza and the embassy maintained contacts there. I had an officer in the political section who did that. I visited Gaza from time to time to see leaders and to talk to them about the situation, to talk to the Israeli occupation officials and so on about what was going on in Gaza. Jerusalem had the same arrangement for the West Bank. We kept each other informed

*Q: Was there disquiet? We are tracking now within a couple of Gaza's was the last ten days has finally been .....*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: But I've heard accounts that the Israeli settler movement moved in and picked up prime plots of ground, the best walker and all that and really treated it like a colony. Were we concerned about this?*

PICKERING: We were, but it was in a sense the Israeli settlements in Gaza, roughly eight or a dozen, in several clusters and some alone, total in my days maybe 6,000 people or slightly more. Those settlements were always seen as a rather forced effort on the part of the Israeli settler movement to stake the claim for some territory which had really very little connection with historical Judaism and in an area heavily overpopulated -- more refugees than original inhabitants, -and where levels of un-employment were very high.

In fact, you had an area, the strip, that was densely populated -- the only portion of the world that I know of where there were more refugees than there were original inhabitants settled in the land. It held big areas of refugee camps, which were very under supported and very squalid -- an area where drinking water began to fail because seawater had infiltrated the aquifer which itself was over used. There was bad water management. An area where municipal services were sparse and not very well developed, but where the intensity and the density of the population was huge. In Gaza, even at the time that I went down and visited, you would have outbreaks of violence and riots among the Palestinians. That led up to intensive Gazan participation in the "intifada" (uprising) of December 1987. There were stories then widely believed, whether they were true or not, that the Israeli's had sponsored what later became Hamas because they were deeply concerned that the Fatah movement of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) had too much control, was too strong and was growing to monopolistic in its ability to lead the Palestinians. Hamas was an off-shoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al Muslimin) with its religious ideas. The Israelis were said to favor Hamas because as a religious body it would oppose the secular al Fatah organization and introduce some balance into Gazan politics. A lot of people widely believed it and it was, if not an article of faith, among Palestinians and Gazans it was beginning to be close to one. I found it interesting that from time to time the Israeli Military Governor in Gaza would introduce me to Palestinians who had a relationship in those days with Hamas

I went down to Gaza and met people. Often they were people that I had met in King Hussein's waiting room when I was in Jordan and Gazans would come over to see him. He had a recognized position on the West Bank before '67; both the West Bankers and the Gazans came over to call on him to talk to him, to tell him about what was going on and to continue to urge him to seek their liberation from Israeli occupation. Many of the Gazans I met with were what we would have called the aristocrats and oligarchs of Gaza, wealthy, landed traditional Palestinians or Gazans. They were not out of sympathy with the PLO and they were often financiers, but they were not what you would call the ordinary Gazans off the street. We looked at them as political leaders. They helped in the AID (Aid for International Development) programs to turn up individuals who were also willing to take leadership. We had turned up a Gazan doctor who had started homes and hospitals for orphaned and sick kids and who we thought was doing a very good job. We supported some of the private and religious hospitals in Gaza because the place was so under supplied with that kind of a facility.

*Q: Was there any thought at the time that if we made a major investment in AID both in the West Bank but even more in Gaza to really raise the standard of living, make it an improved area or something this might take a lot of the pressure off? I mean were there in the first place was it too financially expensive and the second place where Arab leaders, the whole idea of keeping them barefoot and pregnant and unhappy?*

PICKERING: Some years before I got there were we beginning to look at AID projects for the Palestinians. The needs there had caught our attention. The effort was from the other end. How could we build up and strengthen this effort when there was all kinds of opposition in the congress, So the solution was not only totally impractical but such that nobody ever seriously advocated it but that it was I think probably could be seen by some as potentially being dangerous, I don't know. The thought was always that we would get to the real solution when there was a negotiated agreement. Then we would reward the Palestinians through helping them. There was skepticism particularly in the Israeli right wing about doing anything in this area that would one way or another motivate Palestinians or move them ahead.

*Q: We've seen millennial situation, solution as being a Palestinian state at that time or were we thinking about something else?*

PICKERING: No, I think that we were only struggling with the notion of how to engage the PLO in talks first. By the time that we got to talking with the PLO I think that we became inevitably plugged into this two-state paradigm. It just took us many years until the present President Bush came along to recognize the two -- in the Middle East it sometimes takes twenty years to recognize important realities.

*Q: Were you there, speaking as a former consular officer, consular officers have to go to prison and talk to the people who get arrested and all and they see the underside of the regime and then you know we were, ambassadors really don't like to hear that the regime is beating up people and all that. This is not what they want to know. Were you getting reports about Israeli military police being nasty?*

PICKERING: Oh sure. There had been many reports of such before that. They were happening more frequently. That is one of the reasons why I gave a speech in May of '87; I thought there was enough there that I needed to put a marker down on behalf of the United States. We were not going to sit by and ignore this issue. In my view it was necessary for the American ambassador in Israel to speak out publicly about it. We all knew that there were heavy handed aspects of the Israeli occupation that produced negatives which would in some ways work to the ultimate disadvantage of Israeli. Even more importantly the might work as well to the disadvantage United States through its close association with Israel. Some Israeli leaders were more open and tolerant and some were much tougher and much more heavy-handed. But this was coupled with the fact that the Palestinians saw their land and water going in settlements, if not already gone. They saw their water being taken up by Israeli control and then they saw that the Israelis managed the aquifer under the West Bank in their own interest. It meant that springs got closed off from time to time, but it also meant that important land areas got absorbed in settlements on the basis of the fact that through rigorous application of Ottoman or former British colonial rules, the Arabs who owned the land had not filled out the right papers or you know error or done something else so they lost their ownership rights. The Israeli basis for taking their land was either a strict enforcement of their rigid military law and eminent domain on the one hand or a use of old British statutes on the other. Occupied enemy territory or uncertainties or cloudiness of Arab title all helped to take private Arab land. And very often it turned out to be the best land and often the land would be in olive trees and the olive trees take a long time to grow, so they represented a very significant source of income for Arabs who then lost this source of funds. This generated and strengthened feelings of deep grievance.

*Q: I'm just thinking of the time...*

PICKERING: Yeah.

*Q: Maybe this might be a good place to stop.*

PICKERING: Sure, OK. There is much more to say about Israel.

*Q: Since there is much more to say about Israel.*

PICKERING: Our military relationship, the development of our allied relationship, which was formalized, a lot of those kinds of things. The "intifada".

*Q: Your evaluation of Shamir and the Likud at the time and I'm sure there are other things.*

PICKERING: Sure.

*Q: Today is the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2005. Tom you were in Israel from when to when?*

PICKERING: I went to Israel sometime later probably August or September of 1985 and I stayed until the last day on December 1988

*Q: You know, one of the things that politicians say and I'm not sure if military says it is that Israel is our great strategic ally in the Middle East. How would you respond to that?*

PICKERING: That's a fascinating question. A lot of the politician's motivations were obviously heavily determined by their own views of how that statement would or would not impact their domestic political constituencies. To some extent, lots of what was said and done in respect to Israel by American political leaders was done with a very careful eye to their constituencies. I do not think people in the long run were afraid of saying what they thought, maybe some were, but really were obviously deeply concerned about the kind of balance that they had to achieve in this situation. They were uncomfortable in taking Israel to task when they felt that Israel had done things that didn't pass muster as far as they were concerned. They were at the same time extremely sympathetic to Israel in terms of the dangers it faced in the region and extremely supportive of Israel's own progress, its ability to have developed a democratic state, made great progress in science and technology, developed efficient agriculture, created a society that had a real ability to project itself on ahead and to do that in a situation where it was obviously subject to many threats and pressures coming all around it. They were fully conscious of the history of the Shoah, the Holocaust, and this influenced their thinking. In many ways it provided for everybody who served in Israel with a challenge, a constant set of pressures and difficulties, to understand precisely how to deal with the problems and differences that arose.

I found it comfortable to be complimentary about the things that I thought one had to be complimentary about and ought to have been complimentary about and that was no difficulty. I think I recited earlier the instance when I was publicly critical of Israel's treatment of Palestinians before the first "intifada" and garnered some negative reaction, but I also got some positive reactions. I did not make it my public task to wag my finger on every conceivable occasion in public at things I disliked. I would talk to Israeli leaders about things that I thought were bad and I was there through the entire Pollard affair which raised this issue but even in starker terms. I had to go in and see then Prime Minister Peres on several occasions to say in fact that we were not getting what we expected to get in the way of returned documents or we weren't getting the kind of cooperation we expected to get. I had some but not perfect success there. Those were the things that were best left for private conversations rather than public pressures. To some extent at least in those issues I had the feeling that Peres was trying to be responsive to that set of questions to the extent that he could be. He had limitations in domestic politics on what he thought he could do. The Israeli's were not happy about the notion that they had to become in the Pollard case the unwilling allies of the United States' prosecutorial function -- to take a man who, whatever his reasons, had provided them with extremely important and valuable information and serve now on the prosecutorial bench against him. But that is in effect what we asked them to do and that's in effect what they tried to do and did up to a particular point.

*Q: Could you explain what the Pollard affair was?*

PICKERING: The Pollard affair related to a young Jewish-American who worked in a civilian capacity for US naval intelligence who somewhere along the line developed contacts with the Israeli embassy and with a man who I happened to know in another period in another time after this fact as a very dynamic, very intelligent, very effective Israeli air force officer. Over that

period of time, he volunteered to provide them with information based on a supposition that from what he knew and saw, we were not sharing with our Israeli ally all the things he believed in his own individual account we should have been. He was given some compensation for his help. This is his story and so he began to provide information and the Israeli's set up a system to make Xerox copies of documents that he took home with him from naval intelligence and then later returned. You know there were large volumes of these and many of them highly sensitive. I forget exactly how this popped out, but at some point we became aware of the fact that he was doing this. He panicked and tried to drive into the basement of the Israeli embassy to seek refuge, was turned away, came into the custody of American officials. He began to relate at least some of what he had been doing. This opened up the entire situation. Then Joseph diGenova who was the US Attorney in the District came to Israel with Abe Sofaer the legal advisor to the Department of State and others. We arranged for them to talk with a number of Israeli's who were senior in the Israeli government as well as to some lawyers. Among the most senior people they spoke with was the man who was then Director of the Israeli internal intelligence service, the "Shin Bet" or the "Shabak" (Israeli counter intelligence and internal security services). They attempted to cooperate with us within the range of, I guess, some limitations they set for themselves. They did provide us with information and returned a number of documents. Most of the documents they returned, as I recall, were below the level of top secret so that things that maybe were talked, highly incriminating for Pollard, would not have been returned. We asked for and got more documents. In any event, on the basis of all this information Mr. diGenova and another senior Department of Justice official with the prosecution, Mr. Pollard was convicted and sentenced to life. There has since been continuing pressures from Israel and Americans as well from time to time to seek his release.

*Q: Did you from early on feel any pressure from the political elements within the United States to cool it, to keep this from getting...?*

PICKERING: None at all.

*Q: One of things and I don't know whether you've had any glimpse of this but I remember hearing Seymour Hersh wrote a what we would call an expose in the New York Times say that at one point that Pollard was being tasked by the Israeli's to supply almost daily information on location of our nuclear fleet, submarine fleet. Which would imply that if this is true that the Israeli's were using this information, I mean the only explanation of this could be that they are using it to pass on to the Soviets and or maybe to trade for the Soviets to get more Jews out of the...did this come up at all?*

PICKERING: No it never did. I would doubt that an intelligence analyst in the Navy would have access to that kind of operational data. There was, however, and had been references in public from people like Seymour Hersh and others to the fact that Israeli's were using some or all of the Pollard data for horse-trading in the intelligence sphere. I don't know whether anybody ever proved that; but people assumed it on the basis of standard intelligence practice. I think probably the defense lawyers hoped to make some deal for better treatment. He did make a deal in talks for his wife who was involved with him in this, who was not Jewish and was treated in a much more gentler fashion by the prosecution. It was also true that near the end of the case Secretary Weinberger, who apparently felt very strongly about this obviously, issued a statement in which

he was tough in his judgments about the damage that Mr. Pollard had done. Many people think that that played a significant role in the judge's final decision for a life sentence beyond what had been recommended.

*Q: He's become a cause now on both sides in a way in the United States subsequent Israeli prime ministers had raised the question and there are those who in the party politic who are vehemently opposed any deal on this and quite a...I mean it is quite a subliminal issue but it is still there.*

PICKERING: It is and occasionally people come to me perhaps not knowing what my status and role were at the time and they asked me if I would join in the movement to free Mr. Pollard. I have always responded, "No, absolutely not." I have a very good idea of a lot of things that he did and I would not in any way at all want to be supportive of an effort to seek leniency. (Subsequently, I slightly modified this view in public and said that if his release would contribute materially to Israel's joining in and agreeing to a two-state solution I could support the release, but only on that basis)

*Q: Well did you have the feeling knowing that at this time was there a \_\_\_\_ in governments where there's a division between sort of the intelligence often military intelligence deal and the administration. The Israeli government of course has so many people who are ex-generals that it's a little hard to see the line. Did you see a problem in that?*

PICKERING: Well, the Israeli's played this as if it was something of a rogue operation, as if it had been created by a group with the Israeli initials "Lekem" which had been set up to collect scientific and technical intelligence. A former Mossad (intelligence) officer by the name of Rafi Eitan, as I remember, had been put in charge. He was reported to have allowed his enthusiasm for Mr. Pollard and his information to exceed the bounds of mutual respect between the United States and Israel. There was a little bit of that to try to palliate the impact, the negative impact, of this issue on the U.S. body politic.

*Q: Well did this, did you feel this had an impact beyond, on American-Israeli relations?*

PICKERING: Oh I think it did, it slowed down cooperation, it took totally focused attention...

*Q: Military cooperation?*

PICKERING: Yes. It slowed down cooperation for a while and focused the attention on this issue as opposed to other issues we were then dealing with. While it didn't last for a long period of time, it was one of those hiccups that take place in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. In some ways it didn't quite match, but almost matched what happened when some time back in the '70s after the war when Rabin was prime minister and he didn't want to do something that Henry Kissinger thought it was time for the Israeli's to do. Henry called for a reexamination of U.S. policy of Israel, which Henry could do. It froze things for three or four months. That produced a result that the Israeli's took another look at the peace process. This came later in time when the relationship was perhaps less vulnerable to these kinds of things. As a result I think it had a less durable impact. But also for me it rankled up there with the aerial attack on the USS Liberty in 1956 --



during the Israeli invasion of Sinai with Britain and France of Egypt in 1956, and with reported theft of US nuclear materials in the 1960s, with Watergate and Irangate and other similar issues.

*Q: What about the other issue that keeps coming up. About every night I think of anybody who used the fact that the Israeli's have considerable nuclear capabilities. During your time how did you view that?*

PICKERING: In my time we made it very clear we were not having any nuclear cooperation with the Israeli's, civil or military. We were very much at arm's length on all of those activities. I never was asked to, never did and never would have been able to visit any of the Israeli nuclear research establishments. At the same time, it was not an issue for discussion in any contacts that I ever knew between U.S. and Israeli officials. The closest we ever got to it I suppose would have been sensitive discussions with the Israeli's over military cooperation with South Africa that as far as we knew did not include nuclear, but we didn't know for sure. The period that I was there, between '85 and '88 where it was very clear there was a close military technical relationship between the apartheid (separateness) South African regime and the Israeli's. But almost all of this as far as I knew took place in the area of conventional weapons, I didn't see anything that took place in other areas.

*Q: Well there is still this unexplained thing, I don't know when this came about, but this sudden burst of light or explosion or something I guess in the nearest South African Indian Ocean somewhere. Did that happen during your time?*

PICKERING: No that happened when I was in the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science dealing with the scientific issues, so I was very much involved in the U.S. government review of that. In so far as I saw it there was no basis for assuming then that this was a clandestine South African nuclear weapons test or a clandestine Israeli-South African nuclear weapons test. We were not in a position to say that we had adequate information to prove the negative on that but we did not have what we thought would be the usual kinds of things to show that something like that had taken place -- nuclear debris of some kind. We tended to think that it was an anomaly in the detection system which is something you fall back on if you can't otherwise explain something. So it was never I think conclusively proven one way or the other although the general tilt was that it was unlikely to have been a test, but not perfectly disprovable that it happened the way some people have tried to portray it in your question.

*Q: Well before we turn to the "intifada" what was the relationship while you were there of Israel with other countries including South Africa? Particularly in Africa but other places sort of waxes and wanes depending on the influence of the Arab countries. How stood things like that?*

PICKERING: I was there during the period before the Jordanian Peace Agreement, but after the Egyptian peace. If the Israeli's had much in the way of contacts they kept them very quiet and did not talk about them extensively. It was clear that Turkey continued to be a place of interest as well as Ethiopia. Iran, of course, had gone over to the "Mullahs" (a Muslim religious teacher or leader) after the 1978 revolution there. Where it was interesting and certainly I made it matter of...

*Q: You are talking about Iran?*

PICKERING: Yes, and so on it was fascinating that on several occasions and I could probably find it in State Department cables, I had conversations with Rabin about Iran. Interestingly enough he was very strongly in favor of our building our relationship and trying to find a way to open up contacts. This was of course six or nine years after the Mullahs were in power. He said, "Iran is an important country and you need to pay attention to it. We can't let things drift. We ought to see what we can do to begin to reopen talking with them." I think it was not hurting him that Iran was then deep in battle with Iraq.

*Q: How stood things between Israel and Iraq?*

PICKERING: Well, there was as far as I could tell absolutely no meeting of the minds at all. The Israeli's were concerned by the size of the Iraqi military even though they saw deeply tied up with the war with Iran. From that perspective, they didn't express views that allow me to think that they considered it a huge strategic problem for them. I suspect over time that may have shifted -- at the end of the war. Certainly, the Israeli's were very concerned when I was in New York during the first Gulf War about the fact that after having invaded Kuwait, if we went after Iraq, Israel would have said, "Well, we would become a target for Iraqi missile attacks."

*Q: How about again while you were there Syria. Was there any thought that Assad or something could be done with him because the old saying "you can't make war without Egypt, and you can't make peace without Syria"?*

PICKERING: The Syrian issue hung over everything. The Israeli's had in some backhanded ways around 1975 agreed to Syrian presence in Lebanon and then in '82 when they had gone into Lebanon in the Bekaa, they had run into Syrian forces and there had been some fighting. They had some missing in action they were anxious to get back and that occupied a lot of their time as indeed did at least one missing pilot they were still looking for. They felt the Syrians had something to say about where those people were, but they did not reflect at that time a great sense of looming danger. They had pulled their people back out of Beirut after '82 and were continuing to occupy a kind of buffer strip in Southern Lebanon, but pretty well away from the Syrian military directly. They were much more concerned by attacks of Hezbollah ("party of God", Lebanese Shia with close ties to Iran and who supported Palestinian liberation) who they felt were fully supported by the Syrians and Iranians. Losses were suffered in the buffer zone for which they had built up their own force -- the South Lebanese Army, Christians mainly, which was willing to take Israeli support to control and protect their own villages and perhaps others in Southern Lebanon. They were a kind of paid for buffer force out on the marches of the Israeli border and north of the border itself. So the Israeli's had a system intelligence collection, of surrogate forces, of their own troops and fire bases and of controlled areas to try to keep that whole northern area from presenting a danger or a challenge.

The Syrians on the Golan had generally been scrupulously careful to observe the arrangements instituted after the 1973 war and Israel felt that was a quiet and relatively non-threatening situation for them.

There was little if any thought about progress in the late '80s on the Syrian front in large measure because Assad had been heavily resistant to the notion that he would take on that responsibility. There is a complimentary expression "you can't make war without Egypt and peace without Syria" and that Syria was certainly not going to be the first to make peace, but probably also not the last. That dynamic would play some role in the Syrian attitude toward the answer. Clearly they wanted the Golan back and that was defined as having some shoreline on the Lake of Tiberias, even though the old Mandate boundary that was arranged by the UK and France in the early 1920s to be some ten meters from some kind of high water mark. We were not yet into the situation where there was a second peace treaty, the Jordanian peace treaty, where the Israeli's were ready to deal with the Palestinians.

*It Q: The Golan Heights is one of those things that with, I won't say goodwill on each side, but I mean with international intervention helped these forces and all it could be solved. I mean it doesn't seem like an insoluble problem.*

PICKERING: But as we know, on the Golan, it was not yet apparent because there was not that level of detail yet available on positions of the countries. The principal issue in territorial terms that has to be resolved was the question of the shore of Sea of Galilee or Lake Tiberias. As I just noted on that the issue, the Israeli's relied very heavily on the British-French dividing line in the early 1920s between the Palestine mandate and French occupied Syria. The British apparently kept a very narrow strip all around the sea (10ms) that they insisted would be part of the Palestine mandate in order to assure the water supply from the lake. The Israeli's have adopted that approach. The Israeli's didn't want Syria to have access to the shore because it could cut off their ability completely to control the water supply, particularly with the Israeli national water carrier originating the Sea of Galilee It became the principal fresh water reservoir for all of Israel. So Israel's dependence on that water and indeed the feeder streams including the Jordan River meant that the Israeli views about how to handle the Golan were tempered by their deep concern that they would not want to see the Syrians be able to put their feet in the water. Of course, that is what Hafez al-Assad said he had to have in order to resolve the problem. So the issue is still hanging out there on those terms. It was not yet clear then that the Syrians were ready to talk in part because they wanted to give some prominence to the Palestinians and tell the Israeli's they had to accept the discussions with Arafat and the Palestinians first. It's not yet over, and as a result the Syrians held back at various times since then when the progress has been made in the discussions with the Syrians, but never quite got over that last barrier.

*Q: Were you called on to try to do anything to push the Israeli's on this issue?*

PICKERING: Well we spent a good deal of our time and effort with Dick Murphy who was then assistant secretary talking about how we could overcome the deadlock and the deadlock was principally focused on then the Palestinians. We accepted that probably the Syrians were not going to move out ahead of the Palestinians, that they would sit back and see in fact whether in fact the Palestinian part of the equation could still be pushed ahead of the rest. We assumed that it made good sense to handle the issue that way and we had no easy way to leap over it. We met frequently Frank Wisner who was in Egypt, myself, Paul Boeker and then later Rocky Suddarth who was in Jordan, Wat Cluverius who was consul general in Jerusalem, with Dick and members of Dick's team in London and Israel and Holland on occasion and other places and attempted

jointly to see whether there were initiatives or activities we could pursue with the idea in mind of setting up negotiations. At that point it was not yet clear that the Jordanians had no role in the Palestinian effort and that while in effect there were in the early stages of my service in Israel some thoughts about the Jordanians being able to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians that never proved to be the case. Partly through King Hussein, after having seen nothing but frustration come out of that concept, publicly saying that he wasn't going to do it any longer -- that idea ended. The West Bank was a Palestinian issue for the Palestinians to resolve. He was not going to impose himself in it and that while we suspect he still had some lingering interest in trying to promote that kind of a settlement because it made good sense for him and might eventually lead to an earlier, separate Jordanian peace agreement. For everyone on the east side of the Jordan River, the boundary line was pretty well settled. It was always clear that Arafat and most of the Arab states would have never stood still for or allowed Hussein to make a deal for or even with the Palestinians and Israel. That was still not the view in Israel in the late 1980s.

So this was one of a number of efforts of many of them talked about, many of them discussed, many of them tried out and many of them actually prospected by Secretary Shultz and his various meetings around the region. This process continued with Secretary Shultz. After a time the Israeli government changed and then Foreign Minister Shamir became prime minister. Secretary Shultz had the pleasure of trying to sell Prime Minister Shamir on some of the subsequent efforts that we had thought about and that might actually start a negotiating process.

*Q: Well now during the "Intifada" (uprising).... What was your view when you arrived there, you had been in Jordan, of course, before of the Palestinians and Arafat and that?*

PICKERING: Well we had no contact with Arafat. The Palestinian side had the most contact with the local mayors, they were in frequent touch with our consulate general but some of them I had known from my days in Jordan and so I spoke with them and I had contact with the mayors in Gaza. Gaza fell to the embassy in Tel Aviv and the West Bank was covered by the consulate general in Jerusalem although in my day we worked hard to keep the legendary fights that used to erupt from time to time from becoming a fixture on the scene. Indeed worked hard to exchange information and stay in close touch and I think we did a reasonably good job.

The Palestinians in that particular period of time were obviously engaged in a struggle themselves about their own leadership and whether in fact they could promote a process that would go ahead. The Israeli's were at that stage unwilling to talk with him in any capacity. But the Israeli's had lots of contact with individual Palestinians of all persuasions because they were the military government. To some extent the Israeli military governors were political experts who were sympathetic with the labor side of the spectrum and reached out to Palestinian leaders. Many of them had much better contacts than we had with senior figures among the Palestinians, most of whom were one way or another were sympathetically with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and were obviously able to take their views directly to the Israeli government.

The principal concerns of the Palestinians in those days in addition to the hope that they would be able to negotiate some kind of a Israeli withdrawal from the occupation, was that they could improve local conditions for themselves. Things were pretty miserable in terms of what they were able to get -- access to water, obviously continued efforts to prevent the expansion of

settlements on their side, general improvements in levels of health and education, all of which were pretty low for many by almost any standards. It is true that then, to an extent perhaps in some areas, they met Arab standards in the better parts of the Arab world, but there was nothing lavish, nothing really sustained and nothing really exemplary about it. UNRWA helped a great deal with health and education especially

Many Palestinians and Gazans worked in Israel and it was not then seen as a serious security problem. That happened and in a way it helped to facilitate Israeli's economic expansion by providing the common labor needed -- the hewers of wood and the drawers of water so to speak in the economic structure. Many Palestinians then and probably now still work as construction labor on the expansion of the settlements. There were all of these intricate, difficult and conflictive sets of relationships.

*Q: What were you hearing I mean from our people obviously our consulate general in Jerusalem with your own contacts and all? Did you feel this was something that could explode?*

PICKERING: Well we were hearing and seeing lots of things that obviously for anybody who had to put themselves in the position of the Palestinians would have been difficult to take in particularly over a long period of years. Land was taken for public works projects and settlements in some of the better areas, as individuals lost farms and access to water and things of that sort obviously there were serious hardships. I made it clear in an earlier tape that by the mid-summer of 1987 I gave a speech at Hebrew University in which I had one brief but I guess fairly eye catching line that if the Israeli's continued to treat the Palestinians the way they were that the Israeli's could expect a serious blow up of some kind. I didn't have any idea what but I just said, "You can't continue to treat people this way and expect not to have some reaction." That was in May and by December we had the intifada of stones, which was an effort on the part of the Palestinians I think to stay out of the weapons business. I don't know whether they had the capacity for that or not, but throwing stones limits obviously what they could do and the Israeli security was reasonably good. But, it was also clear that by then young stone throwing kids had already begun the process of at least of venting their ire on the streets of the major Palestinian towns, and helping to shut down shops. Israeli soldiers or and military vehicles were the main targets.

*Q: How was this from your perspective playing? We were seeing on TV, in a way this was the, correct me if I am wrong but the first real feeling that here is a major problem and these are a people rather than just rag tag refugees as such.*

PICKERING: Well that may have been true for the U.S. Those of us who had spent time in the area clearly understood that Palestinians were perhaps across the Arab world one of the best educated groups, some of the more most accomplished, some of the most dynamic, some of the most modernized. The occupation in its own way had given them a sense of the effectiveness of democratic government from seeing the Israeli model, which indeed they observed at first hand. While they lived under these hardships and had a very large number of refugees among them, particularly in Gaza, they were also an Arab people that didn't want and would try to escape staying under Israeli occupation. Even in those days, the notion of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state absorbing into its borders the occupied territories -- it was clear that wouldn't

work. On the other hand, if Sharon or others of his group wanted to expel all the Palestinians, drive them out or create situations to drive them out, that wasn't going to work either. The Israeli's would certainly be responsible for the people before the bar of world public opinion if they attempted to do that. So the notion over the long term of recognizing the Palestinians and then dealing with them and giving them the opportunity to create a state was very much behind every thought that was being given on the U.S. side to the peace process. It was an inevitable set of consequences in that situation that had to be looked at.

The real difficulty in those days was that we spent an enormous amount of time trying to figure out how we were going to get these parties together at the table to begin a process of discussion. That has been the lingering and continuing problem. It has been hard to get them to the table at all. We all felt in those days and I think with a great deal of prescience that the closer you got to the agreement the harder it would be to contain the radicals on both sides and the more difficult it would be to suppress outbreaks of violence that would come up. It would happen on both sides in part because within each society, but particularly among the radical Palestinians and hard line Israelis, you had many who would fight the notion that any compromise especially over land could be made.

*Q: Well I think given that I know you have to leave now it's probably a good time to stop. What I would like to talk about and please add but we have just talked about sort of how the "intifada" was set up. I mean our feeling about it but could you talk about how it wasn't an earth change but it certainly was a change in the American public view of the situation and did you feel that where you were and did this have any reflections? What about Jewish groups, particularly more liberal Jewish groups and things of this nature?*

PICKERING: Let's talk more about that and we need to talk more about the character of the "intifada" and the character of the Israeli response and the "intifada" and what they were trying to do...

*Q: And maybe a little more about we didn't talk about your view of Peres and Shamir and all of that.*

PICKERING: Absolutely. We have lots to do there.

*Q: OK.*

PICKERING: OK

*Q: OK. Today is the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2006, a full day, are pushing ahead. Tom, would you talk about the "intifada" and how it manifested itself first when you were there and when and then it's influence because it really changed things around, or it seemed to change the equation.*

PICKERING: It all began in the middle of December 1987 and manifested itself through a combination of three or four things. Some of it began to occur spontaneously, kids throwing rocks, and then some of it took the form of boycotts. I think the third was probably general movement from just a boycott of buying Israeli goods to doing things like refusing to work in

Israel. In its way it tried to bring to the attention of the Israelis, the issues the Palestinians had on their mind back in 1987 but not only to Israeli attention to get redress but also to the attention of the international community. At some point in that year. the national unity government of Israel shifted from being Labor-led and more amenable to a peace process to being Likud-led and very conservative about that process. That too may have helped spark off the public opposition. And it was also clear that both Israeli parties were part of an occupation regime which did not treat Palestinians very well. It was also an effort in what was kind of semi non-violent protest. Most of the violence was stone throwing. The Israeli response was fairly measured, although some people were killed, but it was to use tear gas and rubber bullets and things like that to see if they could disperse the crowds.

*Q: You were talking about the Palestinian aims in '87.*

PICKERING: Yes. So the Palestinians obviously wanted to get some kind of attention to their plight and what was going on. They saw nothing moving.

*Q: Was this...would you say the "intifada" was a spontaneous thing or were the forces sort of saying, "Hey this is a good thing, let's keep it going"?*

PICKERING: I think it grew out of the fact that kids were throwing stones and exasperation levels were reached. I forget whether there were any particularly important other precipitating causes than what I have mentioned, but it generalized and then people began to copycat. There was less what I would call central planning and central organization than there was local spontaneity. But the model kept on growing and so in effect it became highly generalized and then more planning and more efforts at central control took place, because al Fatah saw this as a different kind of issue for them where they had attracted world attention and could put heat on the problem.

*Q: What were the Palestinians after?*

PICKERING: I think the Palestinians were after first and foremost an end to the occupation in any way that they could achieve it. A lot of them saw that they had no military advantage so the negotiating route was the only way open and the only way they could make the negotiating route work was to bring in the United States. Their hopes were always that the United States would somehow work some miracle with the Israelis. At that point as you know we weren't talking with the PLO, so it wasn't until the end of the next year that the process had matured to the point where we started to talk to the PLO. We did that only in Tunis for awhile and then that broke off for a time, but that's a different story and it came at a different period of time.

*Q: What was your feeling and that of your embassy at the time of the Palestinians? Did there seem to be any hope that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank would happen?*

PICKERING: When?

*Q: At this time.*

PICKERING: Oh no I think there was absolutely no hope that it would end shortly. There was also obviously a strong Palestinian wish to have their own state and the moderates among the Palestinians thought that the best they would get, that they would ever get, would be a state alongside Israel. What happened was throughout this whole period when Dick Murphy was assistant secretary on a number of occasions maybe as many as a dozen at various times and in various places he brought the ambassadors together from Jordan, Israel, from Egypt and the consul general from Jerusalem who dealt mainly with the Palestinians but not exclusively, We would spend time together in places like London figuring out how to achieve some kind of breakthrough in the awfully difficult problem of how would we get people to the negotiating table. Since we weren't ready to talk to the PLO directly and they were not ready to talk to us in any way at all and neither were the Israelis, the fascination continued to exist that King Hussein somehow could become the interlocutor or the moderate voice for the Palestinians. That he could actually sit down and negotiate with Palestinians mutually acceptable ones on his delegation and make agreements that would bring the Palestinians along. That was clearly not going to happen although some time of April of 1987 Shimon Peres, then Prime Minister, had one of his meetings with Hussein, they worked out an arrangement which I have discussed on these tapes and the deal was that Jordan would go along if the US would support it. There would be some Palestinian involvement in it and that was part of the arrangement. The U.S. support was critical to getting him on board and probably the rest of the Arab world and so he had some reservations or sort of had one or two fingers crossed behind his back on the issue a little bit.

Peres had another problem. I had relayed information on what was going on even before the meeting where he thought he had a chance to make this happen to the State Department by cable so it wasn't a surprise. It was a bit of a surprise, however, when Peres came back and said, "Now you have to bring Mr. Shamir who is my partner in the national unity government on board for this particular issue. I haven't briefed him but I will." He then went and briefed Mr. Shamir and the first thing Mr. Shamir did was to send his old colleague and former Defense Minister Moshe (Misha) Arens who had been very close to George Shultz to see Shultz and tell him that this was a terrible idea and the Likud would not support it. This meant in fact that Shultz whatever his inclinations might have been they were not to get into the middle of a huge domestic Israeli political fight within the national unity government. So he was very tempered in his response. Peres felt that his effort then went on the rocks in large measure because he knew the U.S. was unwilling to pick up the cudgel at the appropriate time and do what he felt ought to have been done. Persuade Shamir to accept it. The U.S. felt that Peres hadn't prepared the way enough with his own government and King Hussein felt a little bit exposed and a little bit lonely and had some caveats about how to make it all work. It was a heroic try on Peres' part and it was an effort to try to deal with formulas that we had all examined for maybe a period of a couple years to try to get through this position to bring in the Palestinians and talk to them as part of a Jordanian group without talking to them as PLO. Of course that went on until it became clear that the U.S. had to break the deadlock by in effect beginning to open up its own contacts with the Palestinians based on the Palestinians agreeing to the "conditions: -peaceful negotiations, recognize Israel etc..

*Q: Did the "intifada" have an effect? I sensed just watching this on TV as the Israelis all of a sudden had the high ground and all of a sudden you are seeing little kids giving shot.*



PICKERING: Oh no, I think it brought home to all of us the concerns about the occupation, the concerns that I had felt in that speech I had given in May that I had told you about earlier. That was conveyed and I think that the Palestinians knew and understood that the intifada was quite an effective international weapon to deal with this issue. The Europeans became much more, if I could put it this way, sympathetic to the Palestinian side of the issue and the “intifada” was one way of increasing attention to their plight and therefore support for them. Also the relative non-violence of this issue was an appealing characteristic, which was hard for the Israeli’s to deal with. It was one of the few places around the world where a genuine nearly non-violent effort probably made a lot of progress in trying to change a political equation that people on one side at least wanted to change. It was consciousness raising -- it built pressure. I suspect it was one of the factors that led the U.S. over a period of time to say, “Well, we are not going to break this deadlock any other way. We probably have now got to open up some contacts with the Palestinians.” As bad as they are and as difficult as they are and Arafat is nobody’s champion of virtue or democratic ideals or anything else, the US had decided to move that way if it could get solid PLO agreement to the conditions.

*Q: Were you sensing a change in Jewish support, I mean, you know was this...?*

PICKERING: I think less so. In a way this was, of course, up until that point a Labor-dominated government with Labor ideas. Labor was out in front with Peres trying to seek a way to break the deadlock and open the door. But he wasn’t a free agent in the national unity government. He was certainly in control over his side, but wasn’t on the Likud side. While Begin had been for a while an important player in the Israeli government, the Likud developed very strong connections with the Jewish community in the United States and internationally. You saw then quite suddenly what we had all seen, that the Labor party policy since Ben Gurion had always been with respect to Jews from the United States that, if you want to tell us what to do, come here and make “*alia*” -- become an immigrant and a citizen and then you become part of the fabric of our society and you have a perfect right to tell us what to do. But, if you don’t do that and we live here we’re not going to listen to your opinions.

The second principal was basically that if you are not here as a citizen than we would expect that you would support and agree with what an Israeli government decides to do for the country. That was fairly easy in days when Labor ruled and there was a lot of conjunction of view and the Israeli approach was one of seeking negotiations, even if it had all of the obvious reservations about dealing with the PLO.

I told Peres the evening he handed over the Prime Ministry to Shamir that I thought that he would now see, as Likud came to power for considerable time in office, that Labor had created a Frankenstein with these two policies. They had created in the American Jewish community the absolute notion that Jerusalem knows best and that whoever in effect then runs the government of Israel had this absolute commitment of support regardless of what they decided to do. So this began what I would call the period of Likud and right wing dominance, the “absolute commitment”, if you like, of the Jewish community support for an Israel that was increasingly dominated by hardliners. It was also true that American community leadership in anytime of difficulty would surely support in the future the most conservative views, not those involving any potential risk. So the former policy had now achieved an almost permanent and unshakeable

link with the Likud. I think all of that had made a difference. There was no way that Labor in fact could keep the support that it had derived as the leader for so many years of the Israeli government in a period when it became the party of opposition. That support migrated to Likud. You had a number of people who were particularly important making that happen over this period. One of those was of course Netanyahu, both in his role in the embassy here where he was deputy to Moshe Arens and then in New York where he represented Israel very effectively in the UN (United Nations.)

*Q: What was his stance?*

PICKERING: Well, his stance was pretty much the tradition of the Likud right wing stance that all these people have only the view of eliminating Israel in mind and so therefore they all have to be resisted. There is no effective negotiation with that particular approach. In the end they said all of the Palestinians west of the Jordan River would go to the existing Palestinian state, which was Jordan. There would be two states but one would be on east side of the Jordan River and the other on the west side of the Jordan River. So it was a greater Israel movement.

*Q: Well did you see a change in Jewish groups because they came in hordes to Israel and you met many of them?*

PICKERING: I didn't see a change as a result of the "intifada". I don't know whether I mentioned this before, but the only issue on which there was ever a possibility of a serious rift with the diaspora and I saw this develop around the election of 1988 was an entirely different issue. It was the issue of the "Mi Ha Yehudi?" which is the Hebrew expression for "Who is a Jew?" This had to do with the status of reformed conversions in Israeli law. Israel was a state where only the Orthodox Rabbinate is recognized as having valid religious functions. It is a state where religious functions are performed by religious bodies, there is no civil marriage, and that there are something like a dozen or so recognized religious bodies who can do this. But none of them included rabbis from among the conservative or reformed Jewish communities. The question of who is a Jew is reflected in the question of does Israel recognize for the purpose of immigration converts from the reformed Jewish community, the largest in the US? This was always something the Orthodox fought and wanted to eliminate from the legal practice in Israel. The moderates always fought against it and when election time came and it was necessary to think about coalitions between, the main stream political parties depending on their strength and weakness, always tried to gather in the religious parties. For the religious parties this was one of the seminal issues. It wasn't the only such. There were other kinds of issues. One was funding for synagogues and for religious study places and things of that sort. In the election of '88, first the Likud and then Labor, which was astounding, adopted a policy of bringing religious parties over to their side in the electoral campaign by promising to support an amendment to law to define out of law under the 'who is a Jew rubric' reformed converts and conservative converts. It had nothing to do with the number of converts, it had nothing to do with anything else except that it cast a terrible cloud over reformed Judaism. So within twenty-four hours when they did this, the planes started to come from the States. I had told both Shamir and Peres, particularly Peres because Labor had never done this before, that they would see this was one issue in which their friends in the American Jewish community would all part company with them and they would be here very quickly and they would be given to understand this was intolerable and that's

precisely what happened. It is an interesting example. Here was an issue on which the US leadership firmly opposed Israeli action and won, but it is entirely what I would call an inside Jewish issue, that has played that unusual role. Both parties changed their view on the law.

*Q: In other words, the Palestinian question during the time you were there did not particularly divide the American-Jewish community?*

PICKERING: No, it divided the Israeli community on the question of who was prepared to negotiate on what basis and who was not and who was prepared to deal with Palestinians in one form or another but it never carried over to the United States and the Jewish community there. The attitudes in the United States were in the main shaped by whoever was running policy in Israel. That tended to be the prime minister and his office and there was the foreign ministry which has been for a long time a tremendously efficient ministry an able foreign ministry. But on U.S. issues and the U.S. ambassador always dealt with the prime minister on American questions and only secondarily with the foreign minister. When I was there, because of the split government the prime minister my first two years was Peres from Labor. We developed this close working relationship. I had and he, of course, had a much more friendly view toward what the United States wanted to see happen in the Middle East peace process. The Reagan view and the Labor views were close. That made it much easier to deal with Peres. When it shifted, and he became foreign minister then I had the unenviable task of dealing with Mr. Shamir who had been the second and third and fourth rung player with almost no influence on the American relationship. Suddenly it was him and his office that had to be dealt with. I had to make this shift and it was not very easy. It is hard enough when you have an electoral shift, but it's worse when they're both in the same government and then they see all the stuff that is going on and then you have to go and make a shift. That was never easy and Mr. Shamir always had resented the fact that we were close to Mr. Peres for the first two years. There was that extra baggage to carry as well as the fact that he had different ideas. His ideas were basically summed up in one Hebrew word "lo" which means no.

George Shultz also when Shamir became prime minister had the unenviable task of trying to persuade Mr. Shamir to do some things and he got quite close on some things. He did an extremely good job, but it took George Shultz to come over personally and negotiate with Mr. Shamir on a lot of difficult questions.

*Q: Well how...?*

PICKERING: When we were in that wonderful situation he got Mr. Shamir pretty close to a formula and then he couldn't get King Hussein there, so.

*Q: Like trying to herd cats?*

PICKERING: Well it was. It was a perfect example of cat herding, yes.

*Q: Well how did you...did you find dealing with Shamir what was your evaluation of Shamir?*

PICKERING: Shamir was a very interesting man, intelligent and very much in touch with things, very much a product of his own life in his own style. The most interesting thing was when I came then he was foreign minister. The task was how to establish rapport and contact. One of the interesting things I found was that people suggested he would be easier to speak with if I didn't have to do it in his office with all of his assistants kind of guarding the ideology and the policy and it would be easier to open up. They also suggested that he would come to dinner or lunch in a hotel room set up with a meal. He observed kosher so all hotels in Israel serve kosher foods so it was easy to solve that problem.

The other interesting problem was that as he became prime minister his English got better but in those early days he also was, I think, not as fluent as he wanted to be and not as adept at English as he would like to be. And my Hebrew was just in the very learning stage. I never pretended I could do business in Hebrew, but the interesting thing I found out for a very peculiar reason was an interesting story and I will tell you the story. He spoke French very well. He spoke French very well because as a anti-British member of the Stern gang which the UK treated as terrorists, in the period before and at the beginning of the second war he was picked up by the British and deported to something that was close to a concentration camp in Ethiopia just after the British had driven the Italians out East Africa. He escaped from Ethiopia and found his way to French Somaliland, now Djibouti, and sought refugee with the French. The French said they were prepared to provide him refugee but only under one condition that he learn French. So he learned French while he was the guest of the French colonial authorities East Africa. He spoke it quite well and happily I had sufficient French to be able to communicate with him. So we often had these lunches in a hotel room, just the two of us, speaking French. It was a way to kind of break through the English- Hebrew language barrier and to open it up. He found that at least in our early days it was more convenient to speak French. But he would never speak French and I would never ask him to speak French in his office as Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister where all of his assistants were fully conversant with both Hebrew and English. The two of us were ok, but not everybody in his office was fluent in French. He greatly improved his English, so when he became Prime Minister all our conversations were in English.

But Shamir had a predictable quality to him. After I had seen him a lot I could pretty much tell you what he would say with respect to any particular proposal. His view was that anything that pushed him in the direction of a negotiation that involved the Palestinians or giving up anything in terms of the occupation or their hold on the territory or on any very considerably important position in their view would be a non starter. He was concerned that any such process was a slippery slope that might lead to something he didn't want.

*Q: Did you feel at the time that we were inhibited or maybe it wouldn't go anywhere, that speaking to the PLO, did we feel that this was a problem on the road to peace or was this just...?*

PICKERING: No, we felt all along that...I had been in Jordan in '74 when the summit conference I think in Rabat had relieved King Hussein officially of his responsibilities for the West Bank. This came after the Israeli's occupied the territory that he was in possession of in the West Bank. He got that as a result of the movement of his forces into that area in 1948 at the time of Israeli independence. So he, I think, had to go along with the Arab consensus. He had no choice but he had all along a sense that it might come back or he might play a critical role in

negotiating. He harbored less real interest in recovering the territory as time went on because he knew the rest of the Arab world was totally in support of the Palestinians. This was aggravated by Black September in 1970 when he had a war with the PLO Palestinians inside his own country.

On the best of all terms I suppose Palestinians felt it was their time to take over Jordan and made an effort in one way or another to try to do this through armed force in 1970. And he went after them and they lost. So there was no great friendship particularly between the leadership on both sides, but they talked and in usual Arab fashion they didn't allow some of these issues to become huge political dividing lines in public, but behind the scenes there was always the deep feeling of animosity. So the potential of Hussein actually coming forward and facilitating negotiation in one way or another with the Palestinians was always something on their minds, and it was something on Peres' mind because it helped him avoid the problem of having to make the difficult decision inside Israel to deal with Arafat and the PLO directly. And then we refused to deal with Arafat and the PLO directly for a host of reasons including the murders of American diplomats. So we had serious reasons of our own to be unhappy with the PLO and with Yasser Arafat. It took a considerable effort on the part of George Shultz and the Reagan administration to, if I could put it this way, work through that issue. That was not an easy thing to do and, of course, the Israelis themselves were constantly opposed and Shamir was there to assure it.

*Q: Did this change the equation when we started talking? Were the Israeli's worried that we might give away their store or something like that?*

PICKERING: No I mean I think the Israeli's were less worried about the fact of contacts than the possibility of agreement. They might have been worried at various times and in various plans that we would agree with negotiating formulas that put them in jeopardy and they were concerned about the substance of negotiations. But we could not do that for them. We had an on-going at that time conversation between Israel and Egypt what I would call a mini clean up negotiation following Camp David and with the peace treaty having to do with roughly a square mile of territory at the extreme southern point of Israel where just below Eilat in a place called Taba. The Israeli's had hung on to Taba after they withdrew from all of the rest of the Sinai on the basis that their view of the border location favored their keeping it. That went eventually to negotiation and then to an international arbitration after the negotiations set it up and the Israeli's lost. We worked for years with the Israeli's on that and almost every reasonable alternative was met with twenty-five objections of one kind or another so it was an extremely hard process to get negotiated and it took a lot of time and a lot of effort.

*Q: This is Tape 11, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

*Did you have to deal with a pro-Israeli group within the State Department around George Shultz and the White House? I mean did you find that you weren't dealing as just embassy to State Department but there were other forces within our government?*

PICKERING: Every American ambassador in Israel faces the situation where there are many different forces and factors at play. The bulk of the Jewish community is full of historical reasons and important reasons almost unquestionably to be supportive of Israel. As the process

goes ahead some among them are more thoughtful about OK is this nuance or is that particular approach the right one or is it basically whatever the Israeli government needs should be overwhelmingly supported. So, that's a large community and that community often felt that Israel's interests were under represented in the bureaucracy of the State Department At the time I was there I think there were fewer Jewish officers engaged in Middle East negotiations but it was not unknown. But, my feeling was people attempted to keep their objectivity about where things were. There was a very strong feeling in the Jewish community that because many of the officers had spent time in the Arabic speaking world and had learned Arabic that they were irreconcilably opposed to Israel and some were. There was no question about it, but not all.

I was, as you know, kind of a unique experiment because I had spent seven years before, four and a half years in Jordan, but I was not considered an Arabist. I hadn't had formal Arabic language training at the Foreign Service Institute. What I had done I had done was to study Arabic and hour a day at post. I suppose since that was the only service I had in the Middle East in the Arabic speaking world I was not type cast. Although I had served in Muslim countries in Africa, that didn't seem to be prohibitive. I was in the unique situation where I went to Israel in the position where many Israeli's, particular people like Shimon Peres wanted to know what the Jordanians would think about x, y and z and how they thought about the problems and how to interpret what they said. I helped them as much as I could because I thought it was in the U.S. interest to be able to pick up the threads and certainly no one in my view had a greater conviction of the importance of pursuing a peace process than King Hussein. He was in many ways committed to that almost to a fault in some circumstances. I thought OK, well there may be some chances for progress. These were the circumstances and I think that rather than to say at that time there was somehow a cabal that would not admit being open-minded. The Foreign Service was often accused of being too pro-Arab and the whole vision, particularly on the part of the Jewish community was that it was not fair and not valid. I did my best to fight against that and to point out that in fact that I had plenty of room for hearing in Washington and that George Shultz was there a visitor to Israel more frequently than most of his predecessors.

George Shultz himself carried a bit of the burden because of Bechtel's association from which he came as Secretary with big projects in the Arab world, particularly in the oil-producing regions. He was careful and cautious in his handling of the issues. I also think that over time he had to address the question at his level, which was not an easy question, was he prepared to recommend to the president doing things which in the long run might heavily alienate members of the American-Jewish community, a community which was traditionally probably twenty-five percent Republican voters and seventy-five percent Democratic voters -- to alienate that community at a time when it might be a critical voice in a future election.

*Q: Had Ronald Reagan who came out of Hollywood where a tremendous number of people involved in \_\_\_\_\_ and just sort of a knee jerk reaction, I mean, he was pro-Israel particularly coming out of that environment. Did you feel that was a factor?*

PICKERING: No, I thought that was a factor too, but I don't think he was such that frankly at the end of the day he would make a decision that was in his view against American interests rather to be pro Israeli. He had good relations, he worked hard at them and he enjoyed them. He had as you know, a tremendous interest toward being a master teller of jokes and if anything

Israeli's prided themselves in the same way. So I sat down at lunch with him and Israeli guests and spent the whole lunch in absolute howls as they exchanged stories when maybe they should have been exchanging political ideas.

In any event, I think that he had a big picture vision of all of this and he was very much a big picture person. He was never mesmerized with or tortured by detail. He left that to people like George Shultz to handle and to approach him I think you had to have a very high level view of what was going... what were the major features on the landscape and you had to appeal to his own instincts about what was right there and how it would go. He had a basic feeling that Israel was there, it should be there, it had a right to exist, it shouldn't be subject to military attack all the time, that the Israeli's in their use of military force had been more often than not more responsive to provocations at a time than they had been aggressive and that they had worked hard as a people who had suffered mightily to try to develop in their own country an economic system and a political system which mirrored the best in the world' They should be allowed to be there and to run and operate it. On the other hand, I don't think he was terribly negative about Arabs. He felt that OK they desire some sort of fair shake there too. I would suspect that he would not be too far from a two-state solution if we could have figured out a way to get there.

*Q: Did you get, I'm trying to set the stage because people will be looking at this some years from now, that the right wing religious conservatives in America have been a rather strong supporter of Israel coming out of the liberal interpretation of the Bible and all of that. But, was that a factor or...?*

PICKERING: Only the beginning. One saw the beginnings of it but only very, very ephemerally and not very seriously.

*Q: So what happened after we started talking to the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)?*

PICKERING: I mean I left within two months of that. What happened was it took a lot of time to get the talks started and then at somewhere along the line the talks -- the Palestinians told us one thing and did something else -- and they broke. So they had to go back and restart them again a while later.

*Q: So you left there when?*

PICKERING: I left in the end of December of 1988, almost the last day of December 1988.

*Q: Where did you go then?*

PICKERING: Then I went to New York.

*Q: How did you feel about whither Israel and when you left? I'm trying to do a long-term projection, how did you feel when they said you had to go?*

PICKERING: Well I think anytime you try to do a long-term projection you look at key issues. I felt that the peace process had made very little progress, that things were very slow, that maybe

George H. W. Bush when he came in would be able to give it a shove or push along and make some things move. I felt that it was still problematic that we would be able to move the Palestinians seriously in a positive set of directions and even harder to move some of the Israeli's and that in some extent Israeli support for a Likud government which was fully in power in 1988,( and then replaced by electing Rabin until his assassination) was not a very good formula for moving things ahead. The Likud's priorities were basically priorities that didn't seem to be compatible with the kind of peace settlement you had to work out with the Palestinians and vice versa.

I can remember however, it was fascinating, I saw Rabin all the time; he was defense minister and I may have mentioned that he was a remarkable man in the sense that he would never walk away from an argument about an issue or policy. You would have to defend your position with him very, very strongly, But you would come back in a week and you would find he had thought about it and had taken it into account and pretty much adopted it in one way or another in his own way in own position. It may not have been quite the way you expect it but it was fascinating that happened. I can remember one occasion when I was meeting with the UN commander of UNTSO, which I did rarely, the UN Truce Supervision Organization, which looked after the '48 peace in Jerusalem in the old British High Commissioners residence for the mandate. He was a Finn. A UN official walked in and said that I was wanted on the telephone by the defense minister of Israel could I go talk. They took me to a room where I had some quiet and I talked to Rabin and he said I want to tell you that Israel had just bombed Tunis and missed Arafat. I said, "Thank you very much Mr. Minister for telling me, what else happened?" He said, "Well, I don't know much what else happened but I want to pass it along so our friends in the United States are not surprised." So I called Washington right away. This was one of those interesting moments that comes occasionally when you get an unexpected phone call.

*Q: OK, well this is probably a good place to stop.*

PICKERING: Good, well we will pick up.

*Q: But I would like to ask one question before we have you leave there and maybe you can answer it now. What about Sharon? Was he a factor...?*

PICKERING: Yeah and I will talk about that, I would rather talk about that next time because I have a lot to say about him.

*Q: OK.*

PICKERING: We will pick up on that and maybe some other sweeping up stuff we can do on Israel. You can brief me on some of that.

*Q: OK, today is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2006. Tom, Ariel Sharon?*

PICKERING: Yes, let's talk about Ariel Sharon. I had the pleasure of getting to know him probably for the first time very early in my stay in Israel probably in the late summer of 1985. It was kind of interesting because I was figuring out on whom I should pay calls. I generally pay a



lot of calls as I think they are a good way to crack the ice and get through to people. I believe I actually talked to my staff and said, "Should I pay a call on Ariel Sharon?" He had as you all remember by 1985 come out of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila episode which took place during the invasion of Lebanon and in which he talked Prime Minister Menachem Begin into carrying out as defense minister. The Israeli's, went through a refugee camp they were followed by the Phalange, the Lebanese right wing Christian party from which emerged unfortunately hundreds of dead refugees. He had been looked into and was still being looked into. So the question before me was a very simple one, was he somebody that I should see in Israel. After some discussion and cogitation I decided that he was, that I would try to see him as ambassador on a private basis not for publication. He never sought, I believe, to publicize our meetings and if they came to public notice it was in a very low-key way. He was at that time minister of industry and other associated subjects in the state of Israel in the National Unity government

*Q: Wasn't it?*

PICKERING: JDL. But in any event I called on Sharon and we had a discussion. I went alone. The first set of conversations was fine. We had a lot of arguments about his maps, he had lots of maps in prepared folders under plastic so you could look at the West Bank and he set out all the things he wanted to do in respect to building settlements but even more importantly in putting roads in. He saw the roads as a cantonization device I believe for the West Bank, but they also provided Israel with military capacity rapidly to move forces into the Jordan Valley. He wanted to do so and as you know there were a line of settlements built in the low lands of the Jordan Valley principally under the Labor government earlier and they had been thickened up and then Sharon enlarged with a lot of settlements up on the hills.

The discussions were pretty routine. I talked to him about a lot of questions. I had been previously briefed by Sam Lewis on some of the issues and problems arising out of the 1982 episode so I wasn't in total ignorance of that. On one occasion very early on, probably still in 1985, and when we were done with this long discussion, in a friendly but with obviously serious differences over what he was doing and what we thought ought to be the way to deal with the Palestinians and the policies in the West Bank, he said to me and I think we were alone on that occasion, "I want you to know that I am going to be prime minister of this country and that when I get to be prime minister I am going to resolve this problem." He didn't say quite how he was going to resolve this problem. The implication was more to me then through negotiation than it was through the exercise of force to expel Palestinians to Jordan or something of that sort. I was surprised to hear this. I guess maybe I saw him ten times like that over the space of a couple of years. He and I had opportunities to get together on other occasions and talk. I visited him at his invitation at his farm once in the upper Negev. But more times than not he would find time to repeat this mantra on becoming Prime Minister. I found it interest, I think I reported it back when it happened and it stuck in my mind. It stuck in my mind because of another story I will tell you. It stuck in my mind in particular and I think that one of my final cables that I wrote from Jerusalem or from Tel Aviv rather, I said that, "We should keep our eye on Sharon, I don't know what he's going to be doing or where he is going to be going but he is not giving up on his real interest of becoming prime minister of the country and dealing with this problem on that basis."

That led to another story which came much later when I worked for Boeing I went out to Israel once a year more or less and I think in November or December in 2004 and had a chance to meet with Prime Minister Sharon in his office. He was willing to see me and did. We spent about 45 minutes there. I went in with David Ivry who was our country leader in Israel and former ambassador to the US and former top civil servant in the Israeli defense ministry for twelve years. We talked to him then about this issue of what he was going to do. He said, "Well I'm absolutely committed to get out of Gaza." This was by the time that he had announced that he was getting out of Gaza. That had been around for a long time. Actually, that was a favorite idea of the Labor party when I was in Israel. A young Labor member of the Knesset by the name of Haim Ramon had first mentioned it and so it was a Labor preserve. That didn't catch on but he said in 2004, Sharon did say I want to get out of Gaza and I am going to do that. He also said at that time that the Palestinians are having an election and I want you to know that we will work hard to help Mahmoud Abbas but we will not do so in a way that would offset his chances. I thought that was interesting. He was still running Likud and it was not a particularly peace oriented party in terms of evacuations from territories. Like many people's views in Israel, Likud believed the settlements should stay, they are part of the land of Israel, they represented the fruition of 2,000 years of aspirations and they represented as well a security framework which was very much central to what Sharon had been lecturing me on about the '80s. So I walked out of his office and thought about it for a while. I made a mental note. In fact, later gave a speech to some friends on the subject in public and I said, "Well, you know Sharon is at this very interesting point because if he gets out for Gaza he will become a prime minister without a party interestingly enough for several parties that don't have a prime minister and that he will then have to face the question of if he runs again, and there will undoubtedly be elections after he gets out of Gaza, will he do so by creating a new party likely or picking up some or a group of older parties less likely but possible. Or will he bow out of the political scene and I said, "Kind of impossible was my view because he isn't made that way and he doesn't give up and his legacy is attached very much to this issue."

Well, as we all know, in 2005 he got out of Gaza, he lost control of the Likud party. He started his own party and was I think well on the way to winning the next elections, of course, when he was felled by a stroke, which has changed the whole position in the region now. But, it was kind of interesting parallel...my own view was that part of what Sharon was engaged in was basically a thought that he could provide political leadership to the country based on his long experience and his able leadership in the military despite his many mistakes. He wanted to leave a kind of double legacy in Israel. He wanted to leave a legacy that would basically say Sharon as part of the original generation was the last prime minister of the original generation and he left the country in a position where it could look ahead at years of peace rather than the other way around. That helped him to look over the landscape and decide that he had not been successful in his traditional policy which had been pursued since the 1950s -- that if the Arabs hit you, you had to hit them twice as hard and that suddenly somehow will change the mentality over on the Arab side. He was hit very hard by the notion that the Arabs now had developed suicide bombings and walls were the only serious defense and they were not perfect.

Then I think he was hit hard by the notion that in the long run because this eventually I think became something of importance to him and his party, Israel, could not stay Jewish and democratic and still stay in occupation of a very large number of Palestinians. They had to be

undemocratic and Jewish by denying the Palestinians any rights of citizenship or voting or they had to abandon their attachment to the occupation and let the Palestinians go which is what he decided to do and retain a state that was not everything they wished for territorially but would remain Jewish because of the dominant portion of the population, over 80 percent, would stay Jewish for the long term.

He gave up on an idea that I think had been flirted with if not by him then by many of the hard-line Likudniks that in the long run Jordan was the home of the Palestinians. That's where they ought to go and that the Israeli policy ought to be to find all possible ways to speed them on their way, That would allow the rest of territory would become unoccupied and then it could become part of a larger Jewish state of Israel which could become democratic. I think he saw that as unfeasible, maybe undemocratic, certainly unhappy in where things were going. Over time as Jordan and Israel cooperated more quietly and then after the Peace Agreement with Jordan a little more overtly the Jordanians had helped themselves with Israel and with him a lot by making it clear to the Israelis that they were willing to respect their obligations with regard to not exporting security problems to Israel but doing their best to deal with them wherever they found them inside their borders, if necessary. And that forcing many hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, maybe millions, across the border into Jordan would only produce turmoil and maybe a state which was so unbalanced and so difficult that he wouldn't be removing the problem from his border he would just be moving it forty kilometers to the East. He cannot also have considered this idea without thinking about the impact on Israel's international position. Suddenly expelling all the Palestinians was not a feasible thing to do.

*Q: Well Tom, was there the feeling when you arrived, you got there in '85?*

PICKERING: '85, yes the summer of '85.

*Q: That Sharon, in the first place he had done things like not only being tarred with the Sabra and Shatila business but also with the so called siege of Beirut where...*

PICKERING: Well that went on right away at the same time. In effect Sabra and Shatila were just the worst episode.

*Q: As being sort of rocket fire or a hand held thing with a 155 millimeter guns and other things of this nature was he considered...and also during the war he had deliberated flaunted sort of American attempts to stop this I mean his troops had and all. Was he considered at all...*

PICKERING: You mean by which war?

*Q: Well during the...*

PICKERING: The '82...

*Q: '82...*

PICKERING: The invasion, we called it a war.

*Q: It was not a war but anyway we had the episode of the marine lieutenant who tried getting an Israeli tank with a 45 you know. Was there a feeling by anybody within our government that this guy is essentially a war criminal and you just don't touch him or not?*

PICKERING: Nope, I don't think there was. I think there were people in our government and certainly I felt that he was highly problematic but I didn't think that it was the business of the American ambassador to arrange our contacts on the basis of the moral probity of the individuals with which were engaged. It had to be on the basis of the interests of the United States in those individuals. Obviously there are some people and some would argue that, and maybe Ariel Sharon border lined on this, are so distasteful that we wouldn't have any relationship with them at all. I didn't think in particularly in my Israeli contacts that that was necessarily the case. While there were investigations going on about his activity they had not either been completed or had not found him to be guilty. Now these were Israeli internal investigations so you might question their objectivity.

*Q: I was going to ask you know there have been incidents of Israeli troops being accused of beating up Palestinians.*

PICKERING: Oh no, and I mean...

*Q: I mean they've been on film even in all this and there are all these investigations but they always seem to end up with nothing. Was there a feeling on our part that the Israeli's have these investigations but they are not going to go anywhere?*

PICKERING: I think there was and I think there was a question that the Israeli's might change some of their attitudes but not many. There were real serious arguments about building outposts in the West Bank and how many there were, and they continue to this day, and which should be dismantled and under what circumstances. There was a thickening of settlements that went on even while this issue was being argued. There were many in the United States who strongly sympathized with Israel in terms of this posture that it was adopting in the occupied territories.

*Q: Were we looking at the settlements, you know you see these pictures of rather fancy looking settlements from at least the park but I'm told that at one point we were running U2's or satellite pictures over them and they really weren't that used. I mean were these settlements getting filled up?*

PICKERING: Some were and some were not. The whole settlements thing is a long history. It's worth somebody doing a PhD. thesis because over the years our attitudes changed. After 1967 we adopted a fairly strict constructionist view of the Geneva Convention on Occupied Territories and the idea that settlements should be built on them and we originally called them illegal. Herb Hansell, the legal advisor at the State department did so at the time and it was clear he spoke for the US Government on this issue. That has never been rescinded or changed. The Israelis argued that they were not occupied territories because the Jordanians who had preceded them had not been recognized in that occupation very widely -- the UK and Pakistan did. Therefore it was sort of terra nullius and their role there was not that of an occupier. They were thus not bound by the

convention but they said that they would act in accord with the principals and the precepts of the convention and in some areas they did and in some areas they didn't. But they felt fully free to confiscate land for public purposes and that involved not only roads and highways and utilities access and things of that sort, which were at least arguably for the public good. But went beyond that and began then to take land for settlements and some of the land they bought from individuals who were otherwise prepared to sell it to them but to whom they offered attractive prices and so deals were made to that sort. Some of it was confiscated under kind of similar eminent domain proceedings depending upon the purpose, but it was pretty tough and most of it was for settlements.

Settlements were often engaged in farming and so farming land disappeared. Most difficult for the Arabs to accept, were the loss of the olive trees. Many of those were picked up and transplanted into other places either in Israel or in the occupied territories if the land was going to be used for something else.

So it was a long difficult and trying period as the settlements greatly expanded. When I was in Israel, there were probably 100,000 people in settlements. Now it's at least twice that. The general view was that the settlements which are fairly close to the border, or to the cease fire line, so called 1967 line is actually the 1948 line, would probably stay. This was particularly true if they were in areas where there had been Jewish settlements prior to 1948 and where, during the 1948 war, the Jewish population had been expelled by the force of Arab arms at that time.

Similarly we had a view on Jerusalem, which I think we've been fairly faithful to that major changes with respect to Jerusalem could not dictate the outcome of the negotiations. I think that's a view that we have continued to take. We have been fairly scrupulous in avoiding making statements about Jerusalem. We have been careful about Arab East Jerusalem. Israel considers all of Jerusalem to be its capital. I think that in the end it would be hard as a matter of practical fact to find that Americans would not support Jerusalem as being the capital of Israel, but the embassy stays in Tel Aviv and the ambassador's residence stays in Tel Aviv until the issue is resolved with the Palestinians. We have a consulate general in Jerusalem. It deals with the Arabs in the occupied West Bank.

*Q: Were we concerned, and you were there from '85 through...*

PICKERING: Just till almost the last day of '88.

*Q: So that would have put you...there was an election.*

PICKERING: Yes, there was.

*Q: Do you kind...does any ambassador sort of braces themselves in the primary gets around to New York State because that's when all the candidates call for the retribution of...*

PICKERING: Oh yes. I think that as a matter of course and the Israeli's have almost become used to it that during any election in the United States. There was also an election going on in Israel which made it even more important that the contesting parties would all promise at one

point or another during the elections that they were going to move the embassy to Jerusalem. Once elected the president would always examine the situation with a great deal more care and was always warned by the people who had dealt with this for years that the movement of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem would carry with it certain serious consequences for the process of trying to work out the full answer to the issue and therefore needed to be avoided.

*Q: How about with Gaza? How much reporting did we do there and were we concerned as I understand it sort of the Jewish settlers in Gaza had sort of grabbed out the best water and the best spots in Gaza and...*

PICKERING: At first I have to tell you there are no really good spots in Gaza, but they occupied -- I think 8,000 people occupied about 12 maybe 15 percent of the land. Gaza as you know is heavily over populated. The only jurisdiction where there are more refugees than original inhabitants. Of course, Palestinians went there from the '48 war and the '67 war not many from '67 but a lot from '48. Gaza is just very, very crowded. We reported fairly often. I went there fairly frequently, met with private Gazans and met with both Israeli officials and with some of the local leaders, the Sharaa family was a very big leader family in Gaza, fairly wealthy family and I used to meet them first in King Hussein's waiting room in Jordan years before when I was in Amman. I had some connections which I could pick up on. We did some AID projects in Gaza, not a lot but we did some. We didn't visit the settlements and we didn't have contacts with the settlers but we had contacts with the Israeli military government.

It was interesting because it was clear to us at that time and I think this has been written on now and it's fairly current that Hamas, now a designated terrorist organization, were seen by the Israeli military government in Gaza as an offshoot of the Muslim brotherhood of Egypt, the Ikhwan al Muslimin as a religious body. It was seen as a potentially important and useful counter weight to El Fatah, the militant PLO organization, and therefore I believe was patronized by some elements of the Israeli security structure in Gaza in the early days to help build it up.

*Q: The Mau-Mau in Kenya.*

PICKERING: The Mau Mau in Kenya weren't part of the government in Kenya, but I mean the Kikuyu Nationalists who supported that movement, bloody as it was, became members of the Kenyan African National Union party, a lot of them. So we are in that situation once again. I think nobody wants to wait thirty years for Hamas to become legitimate, but nobody wants to dive in bed with Hamas with blood on its hands and so the struggle for some at least now is to find formulas to have the morphing of Hamas take place as rapidly as possible and as genuinely as possible. Of course Hamas, when particularly challenged, as the PLO was when challenged back in the '80s, is not going to like it. They have their own constituencies and they don't want to be humiliated or be told that they have to tear up their sacred writ in order to be part of the democratic and peaceful process, but essentially that's what might have to happen to see change.

In those days we were engaged in that with the PLO and it was interesting. We spent a lot of time discussing this and I think by the end of the Reagan administration George Shultz had made the decision that if Arafat would say the magic words we would start talking to them. Arafat did

manage to utter the magic words and I think sometime in late 1988. We have to keep going to deal with an even worse organization in charge of the Palestinians

*Q: With Gaza, I mean there it sits on the coast no connection to Palestine or was called the occupied territories in those days. Was there any thought of maybe this thing could go back to Egypt or something like that?*

PICKERING: A lot of thought about that. The Egyptians said that they were not interested in having it back. These were not Egyptians from their perspective. Israel wanted them to take Gaza; Egypt had been an occupation of Gaza until '67 -- that was from the end of the '48 War which left them Gaza. But, I think that they had had it as well and were not interested in hanging on to Gaza. They've had to play a major role recently in patrolling the border between Egypt and Gaza to keep the flood of arms from cascading in.

*Q: The arms are going to whom?*

PICKERING: Arms go to organizations like Hamas, al Fatah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza, people who want to disrupt the landscape and don't care much about the peace process. They want to use the force of arms through insurgency, some may say terror, to do everything they can to spoil any potentially successful progress toward peace in Gaza or in the West Bank.

*Q: Well then maybe is there anything else that we should talk about on Israel?*

PICKERING: No, I think in Israel some of the more interesting things were we had a very close economic relationship. We had every year to tell them as they put their budget together what size of assistance we would give. We had the largest American assistance program and no AID mission and the assistance was literally in the form of a check or a credit turned over to the Ministry of Finance at the beginning of the year. We did it for the whole year all at once. All the Israeli's had to do for this in terms of our budget support was to promise to import that amount of dollars worth of goods from the United States. At the end of the year, all they had to do was to show us the export-import balances from their own ledger as long as they had imported as they always had to do, more than a couple of billion dollars worth of U.S. goods and services. On the record that was it to meet fully their commitment with respect to the AID money we gave them.

*Q: I talked to one man, I can't think of his name and he later went to South America as ambassador, he was economic counselor there at one point and talked about his frustration. They would carefully draw up a plan for how much money we should give to Israel and all and essentially the plan would be submitted and the Israeli's would essentially laugh at them and say sorry guys, nice little exercise and then go to their own people and come up with considerably more money. Was there this feeling that if your embassy...*

PICKERING: ...reported into Israel into the United States up to the amount of the cash donation we made and this cash donation admittedly put them in a stronger position with their foreign exchange reserves to support those imports but they were not government imports, there was not a plan; there was not a development.

*Q: Was there any way of tracing money going to the settlements?*

PICKERING: Yes, to some extent people outside Israel tried to keep track of money, of gifts and other benefits to the various settlements around the country. There was something that came out every year that recorded the level of that assistance. It was significant. In effect it was a question of choices -- you could say all money going into the settlements was enabled to do so by the level of US aid.

*Q: Well then you left there in '88?*

PICKERING: I did.

*Q: Wither?*

PICKERING: I went to New York to the UN.

*Q: Now how did that come about? You had a change of regime in the States. I mean...*

PICKERING: Yes, it was very interesting. I had been there three and a half years; the Reagan administration was closing down. In November of 1988 after the US elections, my wife and I decided we would take a camping trip in Egypt. My army attaché and his wife went along. We took two vehicles and we went first along the Egyptian coast from Cairo. We drove across the Sinai, and my wife and I stayed with Frank Wisner and his wife. Then Frank was going off and he had let the Egyptians know that we would be taking this camping trip and we went out to Siwa oasis, which had a famous oracle at the time of Alexander the Great.

*Q: That is where Alexander went and found out that he was God?*

PICKERING: He would be God, or he had been made God or he was going to conquer the world. It is a marvelously interesting place. It is about 200 kilometers, as I remember, south of Mersa Matruh on the Mediterranean coast. We went out there and camped. We found that we couldn't get all the way to Siwa before dark. We had to go and get permits with the Egyptian intelligence service in Mersa Matruh. We got half way to Siwa and we found that as you went along there were microwave towers, big ones. The microwave towers had walls around them, quite large ones, and one had the gate open so we drove inside and camped behind the wall thinking that would probably be safer. The Egyptian intelligence people when we didn't show up in Siwa had sent someone to look for us. They hadn't found us, they were quite excited by that. Then from Siwa we drove all the way back to Cairo and then we went to Faiyum, which is a very nice oasis near Cairo.

Then we went down to the western desert, which is a little bit more remote and camped there several nights. Then we went to the big oasis of Kharga and Dakhla closer to the Nile but still deep in the desert and visited places along what's called the Route of 40 Days, which is camel caravan route between Cairo and Northern Sudan. Then we came back to the Nile River and visited some places along the Nile. By then we had picked up an Egyptian police escort and we were in populated areas and we camped out along the west bank of the Nile one night and said to



the police come and get us in the morning and the police came by very, very early and we waved them off. They said, "No, no I had an urgent telephone call from the American embassy in Cairo." I said, "Where can I receive this call?" and they said well you would have to go to the next big town, Assiut. It was not a particularly hospitable area of Egypt. So the police took us to the railroad station in this big town and I produced coins and called the embassy in Cairo and talked to the DCM -- the ambassador was away. I said, "What's going on?" and he said, "Well, Vice President Bush who had just won the election as president, his office wants to speak to you." I said, "Oh, what about?" He said, "We don't know but when you find out why don't you tell us." So I said, "OK, what do I do?" He said, "Well, they want to speak to you at 5:00 tonight." I said, "OK, I will be at a hotel at 5:00 tonight further down the Nile valley in a big town that made aluminum and the Russians had built the hotel -- Nag Hammadi. I said, "I'm sure I will find a phone." So we got to this hotel and it was a very grand affair with rooms with balconies and at 5:00 I said to my wife, "Well, let me try to make this call." I picked up the phone and of course it was dead, so I went down to the desk and I said, "Is there a phone in the hotel where I can speak to Cairo?" They said, "Oh yes, this red phone right here at the desk" with everybody standing around. So I picked up the phone and called the embassy in Cairo and said could they connect me with the vice president's office in Washington and they did. They said, "Oh yes, we are expecting your call and Vice President Bush wants to talk to you." So I picked up the phone and started to talk to him and we exchanged pleasantries and I congratulated him on the election and it went dead. So, I put the call back through again and got it all down the line and we started off again and he said, "Well before it goes dead again I just want to let you know that I want you to be our representative in New York." Before I could say yes or no, it went dead again. So then I called back and got through and his secretary came on the line and she wanted to know was this a secure call and I said, "No, this is not a secure call." Anyway we talked about modalities, he said that he would like to have me to do this and that they weren't going to make it a member of the cabinet and I said that didn't really bother me and I thought there was plenty of work in New York to do. He said I'll make sure you come down as he did later to the cabinet meetings on subjects of interest that involved the UN. I said I would be delighted to accept and thanked him very much for it and then went up and told my wife and of course we were in shock, but that was fine.

The next night we went to Luxor and above Luxor on the Nile River there is a beautiful Swiss hotel and so we were staying there. About midnight the phone rang and somebody said, "James Baker wants to speak to you." I said, "Well," I said to my wife, "they are ready to take it back right away." He wanted to call me and make sure that nobody else knew about this and would not know about it until they were ready to announce it. I said, "I'm in the middle of nowhere in Egypt and you're safe except for all the intelligence services who were listening in on the phone." He said, "Don't pay any attention to any rumors you hear because there were a lot of people being rumored for the post. But I will let you know and we will communicate with you through the embassy in Tel Aviv if there is anything that we need to get you on." And they did and it went on for a couple of weeks and I began to get a little bit nervous but then they told me that they were about to announce it and so they did.

*Q: Could you talk a bit about at this point your relationship, your many to George Bush senior and to James Baker.*

PICKERING: I hardly knew, I don't think I had ever met James Baker. I had had a lot of experience with George Bush Sr. mainly through visits. He had visited us in Nigeria and stayed with us and we got to know him and Barbara quite well although they got called off in the middle of that for Brezhnev's funeral, or one of those...

*Q: This is during that you know...*

PICKERING: During the year of the funerals, Andropov, Chernenko, all three died. But I think this was Brezhnev, this was the big first one.

Then as I related earlier in the oral history, I got him to come down to El Salvador and do a very tough job with the colonels reading them the riot act to stop death squad activities. He did that. I think he had come years before that, when I was in Jordan, come out to see the Touqans who were the parents of then the recently deceased Queen Alia. So we joined them at dinner there at the Touqans and I think that may have been the first time they had visited. But most places we served, the Bushes came by either as retired this or that or on several occasions as vice president so I had gotten to know him. That was my major contact with him and I don't know particularly why he asked me to take the job, but I was very pleased.

*Q: The job too.*

PICKERING: He'd had the job too and I was very pleased not only on a personal basis but he had asked a career officer to take the job because in general that job was political. Cas Yost's father, a career officer, had been permanent representative, Don McHenry, who have actually left the service, had come back and had been perm rep in New York. But there had not been too many career people who had gone to New York. New York had always been considered a very senior, sort of notch above a bilateral embassy in many ways. Often a member of the cabinet, it was tremendously interesting job.

I had a peculiar experience before that. Probably in November of that 1988. Prime Minister Shamir had come to the States maybe earlier in September at the time of the UN General Assembly. George Shultz was up doing all of the general assembly general debate meetings that the secretary has to go through with visiting members of foreign delegations -- usually the heads of states come and give speeches. Shamir came to give a speech that year. I remember after the meetings were over and leaving the UN Plaza Hotel and plumping myself down in that broken down New York cab and then rolling over the potholed streets on the way out to Kennedy (international airport) to get on a plane to go back to Israel. And I thought, "Boy am I glad I'm never going to have to serve in this town."

So I then had a kind of negative feeling about it. I had been born and brought up in New Jersey right outside of New York -so I knew New York very well. I was not a stranger to New York, but the idea of going back to New York to live was also intriguing. The Perm Rep has very nice quarters on the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor, the penthouse floor, of the Waldorf Astoria Towers. The living accommodations were extremely nice particularly in a crowded New York City where what our staff folks could afford was a lot less.

*Q: A major problem...*

PICKERING: A major problem in New York is how to get people to go and serve in New York. The people who are willing to go are usually New Yorkers who can go and live with family or know how to live in New York or are prepared to stand the gap or folks who have the personal wealth to put into their housing. We did establish housing allowances that went through a very checkered career because. At one point we had very generous housing allowances and some folks used those housing allowances to purchase their apartments. This caused no end of difficulty with the Congress and with the general public once it was found out because an apartment is worth a fancy price in New York City.

But, in any event that was in November and I sort of thought that by the turn of the year maybe into January it would be time to come back and start talks with the Department about a next assignment. George Shultz was still secretary and he told me that he wanted Bill Brown who was my successor to come out before the end of the year. We arranged to leave Israel on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, actually overlapped with Bill in an airport in Europe. I forget where it was London or Vienna on the way out so we had a chance really just to brief Bill. He had gotten confirmed by then and was on his way in.

*Q: Tell me about coming back and you know before you really took over but I would think always with a new president you've got a cadre around some of the principal characters particularly around Baker that you were kind of a I mean they probably didn't know you as well. Baker didn't know you.*

PICKERING: No, no.

*Q: You know an election team is a tight knit team and some guy who is a professional diplomat coming in is a son of a bitch from out of town in a way.*

PICKERING: Well yes and no. I think Baker had by then begun to put together his own team. Bob Kimmitt who I worked with extensively and perhaps the most directly relevant Baker person is, if you know Bob, an absolutely sensational person to work with, -- very open. Bob was military academy graduate, had been a military officer and done other things in the government and knew how the government worked and came in as undersecretary for political affairs. Larry Eagleburger was deputy secretary. So Larry obviously, also interfaced with the career service. I had a lot to do with both of them and they were much more in my line. Jesse Helms had wanted John Bolton to come in and be assistant secretary of state for international organizational affairs, which was not obviously my first choice. I didn't know much about John but what I did know about John did lead me to believe he was someone who thought the UN would not be a useful instrument of American foreign policy, if I can put it that way. So John came in after the time that I got up to New York but I had an opportunity through mutual friends to meet him and we talked. We had a civil relationship throughout the whole period of time, but I had from time to time to call Secretary Baker when I felt that I was being asked to carry out instructions that were not accomplishable and talk to him about what we were doing. He was always willing to receive calls. I didn't bother him frequently but on those infrequent occasions when I did he was helpful. And from time to time in the middle of difficult negotiations in New York over resolutions I

needed to resort to him to help on tie breaking and he was extremely good. He didn't always take all of your recommendations but had ways to suggest moving ahead and had his own ideas about can you get this, can you get that and I said, "Sure, let me try that." So we had a very good professional relationship on that basis.

What actually happened was I came back at the end of December as I remember and began to prepare for hearings. There was an office here in town. Dick Walters was my predecessor and Dick was absolutely superb as I said as a guy who was about to be succeeded, but he was then already announced for Germany where he had always wanted to go. So I had a very good relationship with Dick. I had a small permanent office in Washington to which I appointed Ann Hollick to represent my interest in Washington and to keep up with the interagency process and prepare for hearings, which came fairly quickly in February. It was an interesting time. I had gone up on the Hill and seen some senators who were interested in wanting to talk. We had a number of conversations with them about various things that had happened in my career and my life that they had questions about. I don't think there was anything that was particularly startling for anybody.

*Q: Was El Salvador at that time? It got more receptive later on.*

PICKERING: It had died down a bit. Paul Sarbanes had questions about a document that I gave to Ollie North at one occasion, which I think I have talked about here. But we sat down and talked about it and he said, "I would like to ask you about it." I said, "Well if you ask me about it I will say quite frankly that if I had to do over again I wouldn't do it the way I did." There was no issue there as far as I was concerned. I had gone by to see George Mitchell who was majority leader; the Democrats controlled the Senate, and told him what I was about. George and I had been in college together and I hadn't seen a lot of him, but it was an easy reunion and we had a good talk and George was very interested in substance and had an opportunity to discuss a lot of issues. I also saw Claiborne Pell who was the chairman committee at the time.

I had my hearings and I think they went through quite well. I didn't have my sense as to whether Senator Helms was going to be negative or not, but got some vibes that he wasn't necessarily happy with this nomination. It didn't seem to be a problem and then when the time came to take this from the committee to the floor, Senator Helms asked for a recorded vote on the floor which senators can do. It doesn't mean there is a problem, it doesn't mean there is not a problem. This was on a Thursday and I had hoped for an early confirmation to get to New York. The Senate doesn't do recorded votes on Friday or Monday. Senators need time to get to their constituents, there is nothing nefarious at all about it, and I think it makes sense.

So the next week was considering the nomination of John Tower, to be the secretary of defense and that was fairly acrimonious. I went to George Mitchell, I immediately called George or went up to see him, I forget which one and said, "I would like to move this along and I think that if you talked to the president he would say the same thing and there is a lot of stuff going on in New York." He said, "Don't worry I'll take care of it." He asked his staff to bring him the calendar and he looked at it and said, "Well, we have John Tower on Tuesday and that will be all on the floor and he said, "I will interrupt the floor for an hour to have a debate on your nomination and vote it off on the floor." So I was sitting at a friend's house, you know when you

come back to get confirmed you can't get back into your house usually. So we were staying at a friend's house. I turned on the TV and there was this debate on John Tower and then suddenly the whole thing stopped. They kept it on so I had this wonderful opportunity to see all sorts of old Senate friends saying very nice things for that hour because George had gone around and whipped them all into shape to fill the hour. Then they took the vote. It turned out that of the 100 Senators, 99 voted for me and no one voted against me. Quentin Burdick was ill in the hospital in North Dakota so he didn't vote. I was confirmed. I remember maybe two months later George Mitchell called me or his office called me and said, "Could I stop by the office the next time I was in Washington." I said, "Sure, I'm coming down on so and so" so we made a date." So I went in to see George and we chatted for a while and Claiborne Pell came in and they pulled out this framed tally sheet on my nomination that they presented to me and both of them signed it on the bottom. It was a really nice souvenir. That was a very nice confirmation process.

*Q: Also, you didn't get caught up because John Tower was not confirmed. I mean he apparently had drinking problems.*

PICKERING: An alcohol problem.

*Q: And a scurvy problem. So I mean if you kind of waited that could have...*

PICKERING: Anyway that came on afterwards. After that was all over we went up to New York and started to work. There were a couple of interesting things. Dick Walters said, "I know in the Foreign Service you can't have two ambassadors in the country at the same time and all the bilateral embassies turn over that way. Dick had been around for a long time and he said, "Well, I would like to do something different." He said, "Both you and I are in the country right now and we are both confirmed." He said, "Why don't we have a joint party at the UN and I will give my farewell and you give your welcome." I said, "Dick I would love to do that." Dick had an ocean of friends, he was extremely accomplished, a lot of language capability and so we had this party in the upper floor of the US Mission in New York. We had the two of us and my wife and he said goodbye and I said hello to everybody. It was extremely good, it was a very nice, interesting turnover and it worked beautifully. Then Dick later went back and got confirmed and went off to Germany.

*Q: When you were back in Washington before you went up what were you gaining from your own reading and also from the international organization bureau. What were the issues that you felt were important?*

PICKERING: Rich Williamson was the assistant secretary and Rich as you know is a Republican, very internationalist, very supportive of the UN and I got very good briefings on the things that were going on. The Security Council was in the doldrums, there wasn't much going on but we had a set of issues interestingly that related to a British initiative on Afghanistan built around the Security Council. It involved starting with consultations among the permanent five members to see if their discussions in New York on this issue could begin to reach a meeting of the minds. This had followed a more successful effort up until then on Cambodia in which the permanent five had discussions on Cambodia which led to a negotiating effort. That led to an eventual agreement on Cambodia in terms of how the UN would play a role, what would happen

with the Vietnamese, how the then government would take over and what roles the various parties would play in Cambodia. So that was going on and that was principally spearheaded by my first British colleague in New York, Sir Crispin Tickell. Crispin had seen by the middle of '88, that maybe things were moving to the point where the Security Council could begin to occupy more than just space. So there was the series of off-the-record, but not quite totally secret perm-five consultations that began the process. I will refer to this later because it played an increasingly important role in the Security Council particularly in dealing with the Gulf War. So that was on going.

There was the Namibia effort that had been negotiating an agreement in the Reagan administration. Chet Crocker played the central role in this. The UN would be playing a major role in the transition in Namibia. Part of that early first Spring we had a big hiccup in Namibia. The rebels had come south from Angola when they shouldn't have and embarrassed the UN, torn up the landscape a bit and kind of set the South African's teeth on edge. We had to work very hard to get that undone. Martti Ahtisaari was out there as the Secretary General's Special representative and did a first class job -- subsequently he was president of Finland. He had been undersecretary general of the UN for administration and then taken over the UN leadership in Namibia in its transition to statehood. So we were dealing with that.

We had a bunch of issues around the world that were kind of simmering, certainly not in the center of the UN.

Maybe before I end up talking a little bit about how I staffed the mission.

*Q: Yes.*

PICKERING: I think after I came back one day I got a call from president-elect Bush. I think he was still in the transition office before the 20<sup>th</sup> of January. He said, "It has just come to my attention that you and I need to talk about people." I said, "I would love to talk about people, I've got some ideas and I suspect you and your team do too," and he said, "Yes." "What about you appoint one and I appoint three." I said, "I will settle for two and two." He laughed and he said, "OK", and then I said, "Then I will work with your personnel office on the two I would like to have come from the White House, if that is OK with you, sir." So I had had a lot of contacts over the years with Jonathan Moore who had good Republican credentials and had actually worked with Elliot Richardson for a long period of time. I always thought Jonathan was excellent. I called Jonathan and said, "Jonathan, if I can recruit you as a political appointee would you like to do it. This is the job, you will be my economic chief." He said, "I would love to do it" and that he had been interested in development programs for a long time. So I went right to the White House personnel and sold them on Jonathan.

Then the next fellow that came along was an appointment that they had in mind. It was a minority person from the District and I said, "Fine, if that's what the president wants I'm here to do his bidding and we have an agreement that I will take this person., but this fellow had what I would call conflict of interest problems. So as soon as that happened I suggested to the White House that I would be glad to take another person on their staff who I had gotten to know and work with which was a woman by the name of Shirin Tahir-Kheli, who is of South Asian origin.

She had worked on South Asia and I admired Shirin and her work and knowledge very much and I thought that she brought a lot of good sense to South Asian issues. I would bring her to New York to work on social questions. She liked the idea. So, I went to the White House, and I knew the president liked Shirin so I said, "How about we get Shirin up here?" and so they liked that.

Then I went ahead on my nominations and said to a lot of friends, "Who's the..."

*Q: Today is the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2006. Tom?*

PICKERING: Yeah, so picking up the thread on UN staffing. I said to a lot of people around the state department, "Who would you recommend as the best comer in the Foreign Service and a lot of people recommended a lot of different people, but there were a lot of folks were very high on a person by the name of Alexander Watson whom I had not met but knew only by reputation. Alec was then ambassador in Lima and doing a great job. So I gave Alec a cold call. I called and said, "How would you like to come to New York. it's not what you've been doing, you're an expert in economics and you've had a lot of experience in Latin America, but I want somebody different and I want somebody who has ideas and I want somebody who can pick up the management in the mission. I think that from everything that I have heard about you, you would be an excellent candidate for the job. He was interested and so we talked about it and we worked it out and Alec came up and became my principal deputy.

I had a lot of experience off and on with Jim Wilkinson who I think was then probably deputy assistant secretary in EUR. Jim will forgive me on the record if I am mistaken where he was at the time. I thought highly of Jim. Jim was an unusual Foreign Service officer in the sense that he had done very, very well in his career and had a lot of good background and in fact had one of the most interesting backgrounds in the Foreign Service because as I recall while had studied engineering and science, he never took a degree. He didn't bother with it. He was good enough to not ever have to worry about that and so Jim came up and worked for me as well.

Alec was in a sense the DCM although with a very elevated ambassadorial title and helped me a great deal on a wide range of issues and was the principal individual who would fill in for me in the Security Council.

Jim became the internal manager of the mission and looked after a lot of the UN relationships -- everything from the special office in the mission in New York, which deals with the foreign diplomatic colony there to UN budgets. We in a sense had an office that got them out of jail and dealt with their lost household effects and customs interruptions and issues with the New York police department. Actually the office was headed by a wonderful former New York City policeman, Bob Muller, who could do all of that. Then we had a special section that dealt with things like the budgeting committee at the UN as well as our internal administrative establishment and Jim covered all of that.

Jonathan came in and went right away to the economic and social council and Shirin helped me particularly in the general assembly on a wide range of issues. A lot of them, woman's issues, population programs, questions having to do with social issues that the UN were constantly being dealt with. With all of those she was excellent. You may think this is a top heavy

organization, but New York is a very busy place and having in effect four ambassadorial colleagues to deal with all the things that were going on in New York kept us all running, but meant that we could relate to a wide range of UN representatives and senior UN officials without too many protocol issues intervening..

I was particularly fortunate at that point too in having Bob Grey, whom I'd known for years, a disarmament expert, as political counselor. Bob was head of the USUN political section, which played a huge role. Bob later went on to become ambassador to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. Over a period of time Bob recruited Jim Cunningham who later became a super star in New York and actually ran the mission in between several perm reps and was brought back to New York by Dick Holbrooke. I recommended Jim highly to Dick and so Jim filled in after Dick left and did a really wonderful job. Unnecessarily I think Jim paid a price for that with the people who don't like the UN and for a time Jim was held back in his future ability to go on to become an ambassador. He went to Hong Kong and now has been in Afghanistan and Iraq We had then a lot of depth with Cameroon Hume who had written a book about the UN also in the political section and later became ambassador in South Africa and Indonesia.

*Q: Did you feel that as a president, having been a previously perm rep was passing the word down don't overload this with political wannabes or something?*

PICKERING: I think that the president was pushed by the system in the White House to say let us get our fair share of New York. But at that point he was perfectly happy to see me work as it turned out, with his White House personnel office, on finding the right political appointees because he knew what the job required. I think he too knew that New York shouldn't be overloaded with outsiders.

The other interesting thing was that New York had other opportunities. We had a rotating arrangement between the House and the Senate where they in alternate years would be members of the generally assembly delegation. We also had the very unusual arrangement of having public members to the general assembly delegation. Public members came out of the political appointments process, but were people that I thought were extremely good. I had Pearl Bailey, who I had happened to know in various assignments overseas, Barbara Franklin who later became secretary of commerce in the Bush administration was on my delegation. I had Happy Rockefeller who came down and did a great job...

*Q: Who worked with the former vice president?*

PICKERING: Who was married to the vice president. All of them were fantastic because they were all capable, well known personalities and because they liked the job and because other people liked them. So we had this really interesting asset. If I could have gotten them for a longer time I would have had them for a longer period. But we had that kind of representation as well as staff at the UN.

Principal problems in staffing the UN are, and this awful difficult problem, that New York is a terribly expensive place to live regardless of whether you are a junior FSO or not. The problem of obtaining appropriate housing allowances in New York has always been extremely difficult



because in previous times at least the congress had a strong feeling that there was some abuse of the housing allowance issue. So it was cut back and very limited and to staff the UN there were not enough arrangements made for provided housing. Individuals could safely house themselves in the Washington, DC area and everybody took account of that and they could go overseas...it was evolving that most overseas posts provided government housing because it was to the government's advantage to do that.

But in New York there was a gap. So to find good people to come to New York we had to rely heavily on those people that we could house under the existing program. That was very few of the top people. Then we had to try to find people who had family in New York, who wanted to come to New York and who might have had a house or a family residence in New York. But it was a peculiar sort of circumstances and many of our people who came had to commute long distances from Garden City and Essex Fells and places like that. Many of them took a real beating in the purse to be part of the New York staff. We were not able to get that rectified. It was never clearly seen as an overseas post. The rest of the federal government found it difficult to subsidize the people in New York, but they went there on a much more permanent basis and became denizens of the suburbs. They didn't have the 'I have got to be on call' problem that a lot of our people did at the New York mission. For example, it was a rule of the Security Council that the Council had to be prepared to meet at a one hour's notice. It rarely, if ever, in its existence made it that quickly, but I can remember (I will talk more about this later) being called at 10:00 at night on August 1, 1990 when Iraq had invaded Kuwait and asked from Washington to call for a meeting at eleven o'clock. I think we got over there and got going about twelve-thirty. So it wasn't in a sense too far off -- the need for one hour's availability for some of our officers say in the political section and getting your staff in to start working these problems when they had gone out to the suburbs was not an easy thing to do. There were all kinds of these issues and special circumstances in New York that had to be met.

*Q: Let's talk about sort of the housekeeping problems first. What about the UN budget and the United States during your time there? When you got there what was the situation?*

PICKERING: During my time it was as best can I recall were not woefully in arrears, we were somewhat but not seriously so. As I remember, the general appropriations process in the congress was OK. You have to differentiate because in my period of time the dividing line in the UN was before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The sense in the United States of the UN Security Council's performance in connection with the invasion of Kuwait was extremely satisfactory. While maybe some of the holdouts on the Hill had reservations, it was not a huge problem to get them to provide the money. In addition, generally speaking, OMB (Office of Management and Budget) would support the administration view on what to appropriate. We had some anomalies, so that while 1989 was my first year and I can't remember but don't believe we had a big problem in 1989 even when the UN in fact was doing very little. Maybe we had no problems because it was doing very little. It was the end of the Cold War.

By 1990, of course we had changed the view and so the budgets from '91 and '92 tended to reflect a better more positive view on the part of the Washington community in dealing with that issue. I had to go down and defend pieces of the budget. There were concerns about some areas.

We withheld and still continue to do the money that went from UN funds to so-called Freedom Fighter organizations, particularly the PLO. We were not dealing with the PLO in those days. It's interesting almost the same sort of feelings in those days that we have for Hamas now. Similarly, I think was SWAPO was not funded and that money was held back from our assessed contribution.

There was a second category where...

*Q: SWAPO being?*

PICKERING: Southwest Africa Peoples Organization, which was one of the two liberation movements engaged in fighting for Namibian independence. The second set of issues had to do with the fact that the UN plussed-up American employees to cover their tax liability to the United States to equalize them with the other international employees who had diplomatic immunities and thus received their salaries free of US taxes. So there was a serious concern on the part of the United States that it should not be aiding and abetting this practice. Therefore we withheld a sum equivalent to what it was we judged was used to plus up U.S. salaries. I don't think it ever put the UN in serious financial jeopardy but tended to be another factor in the arrears issues.

We may have been in arrears in some of the peace-keeping expenses in those days and I think that was always a struggle to get the Congress to look at those expenses which were over and above the regular budget and which we were judged to have a higher share in part because it was seen by the UN community as a kind of compensation to them for the permanent member status we occupied in the security council. The view was kind of 'well, if you are going to have the privilege of authorizing a peace-keeping operation you are going to pay a little larger share of the money for it.' So the scale of assessments in those days and still today is somewhat different and tilted against the permanent members. Russia I think in those days was in arrearage, China was minor in terms of its expenses so it didn't seem to have any trouble paying.

*Q: What about you say that congress was still sending representatives to the UN on various committees. I always of Senator Vandenberg sitting in and it goes back a long way but I mean it sets a pattern. Did you find there were problems and pluses on the various both the staff and the within the congress particularly the Senate I guess?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, there were such people in the Senate, Senator Helms notoriously so, who thought the UN was a menace or a problem or something to be disciplined or brought to heel. It was true that the UN was not a perfect bureaucracy by any means. That it tended to be dominated as it still is unfortunately by the notion that regional representation seems to triumph over merit in the choice of personnel, even though the charter says exactly the opposite is true. People were in a struggle for jobs, States were in a struggle for jobs and states were in a struggle to deal with the budget issues. The Fifth Committee of the general assembly which deals with the budget issues was notoriously difficult, but also the ACABQ, I can't remember what all those initials stand for, but it was a committee on the budget of the UN which was a more select committee and tended to have a very large say in what the UN budget was -- often to the detriment of the secretary general. Many people still don't realize the secretary general then and now has very

little capability of firing people and very little capability in the end of making a personal selection of individuals who will work on the secretary's staff. To some extent he has a role in selection of his deputy. I think that the new job -- deputy secretary general -- which wasn't there then, although it was part of the reform process that I was engaged in when I was there, the secretary general has a little more control over it. But the under secretaries general are sort of divided up internationally. So there was a Russian, an American, a British, a French and a Chinese. So the permanent members sort of struck again and got themselves department head jobs so to speak, or cabinet level positions. They weren't all the under secretaries general, more have been created, but in those days those big five jobs tended to be pretty much the in the fief of the appointing state. The appointing state said who they were going to send. I was particularly lucky that an old friend and indeed a mentor of mine for many, many years, Ron Spiers, arrived at about the same time that I did and then the U.S. job had become the general assembly manager job which is what Ron did among many other things very, very well. The other jobs that were out there were apportioned around. The British traditionally had the political job which had a serious role in peace-keeping since the days when, now Sir Brian, Urquhart the political under secretary general played a great role in help Dag Hammarskjöld to put in place UN peacekeeping.

*Q: This is Tape 12, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: New York at the UN it was fascinating in the fact that I got up there early (February) in 1989. I was pretty far up in the confirmation process. I don't know whether I talked about my confirmation experience.

*Q: I can't remember. Why don't you go ahead and tell us.*

PICKERING: I will try to repeat it in as less extensive form than I normally do, but it was kind of fun. I think I did point out how President Bush had found me in the Egyptian desert camping and asked me to take the job. When I came back, I had the usual hearings which went fine and then along about early in February my name was coming up for a approval on the floor. Senator Helms had asked, as was his right, to have a recorded vote. I wasn't sure what that was in aid of but I found out that it couldn't happen on Fridays or Mondays; they don't do recorded votes in the Senate on Fridays and Mondays. So I asked George Mitchell with whom I had been in college and stayed in touch with and then actually had gone by to see, called on, in connection with this assignment, if there was anything that we could do. He was majority leader then in the Senate. He said, "Sure Tom, I'll fix that. We have John Tower coming up on Tuesday" and it was a very controversial nomination.

*Q: Oh very much so. It was to be for secretary of defense.*

PICKERING: Yes, secretary of defense and he said, "I will take an hour out in the afternoon of the Tower nomination process to have the debate that has to go on with you and we will do a recorded vote between four and five o'clock." So I, like a lot of folks who come back for confirmation, was sitting in the home of a friend where we put up while we came back and turned on the television. Sure enough, there it was. It was kind of interesting. I got a lot of very nice and flattering comments, no negative ones -- a number of people that I had known on the Hill were kind enough to stand up and say good words. So the vote took place and the vote was

99 in favor and none against (One abstention was Senator Quentin Burdick from North Dakota who was in the hospital). A couple months later George asked me to come up and see him in his office and I did. Claiborne Pell was there who was then chairman of the committee. They both presented me with a signed copy, which I still have, of the tally sheet. So I was very pleased to have that. It was a nice souvenir. It was an interesting process.

But then I arrived in New York fairly quickly and it was an interesting departure. I had been in close touch with Dick Walters, General Vernon Walters, who was up there and who was leaving and who was on his way to his next assignment in Germany. I think about that time Dick had been asked by the president if he would go to Germany and he was pleased and delighted. So Dick said to me he said, "Why don't we have a departure from the normal pattern and bilateral embassies. We don't have two ambassadors in the country at once. It is too confusing. Why don't we since we are both here in the United States together anyway have a joint party? So my farewell party can be your welcoming party and we can meet all the people at once and we can save a little money for the government, we can break new ground here." I said, "I would be delighted," so we did that. So Dick and I had this joint party at the UN mission one evening and he left and I arrived. I think he left the apartment shortly after and I moved in so it was all done very, very smoothly and it was terrific because we got a great crowd of people. It was a wonderful introduction for me to all people he knew and worked with and all of them around there. Most of them were always curious about the American ambassador anyway because in the firmament in New York we have a particular position not just because of our size and our strength but because we are the host country.

*Q: The landlord.*

PICKERING: Yes, the landlord and in many ways one of the things that means is that in the peculiar UN, higher archery of protocol, no matter how new you are in place you often get singled out to be given a protocol place at the head of the line which is always very nice because it means that you have less waiting and can get more done than other folks can. There is also, I think, in the peculiar protocol of New York, a tendency to put the permanent five members of the Security Council in advantageous positions whenever that seems to arise. The truth is in New York protocol follows a very unusual arrangement. What happens is that each year at the beginning of the general assembly session they put the names of all the member states in a hat and they draw one out. That member state gets the first seat facing the general assembly from the podium on the right in the first row and then everybody alphabetically follows and that's supposed to set the order of protocol for the United Nations for the coming year. Who worked this out I don't know, but it's an introduction to democratic principals in an otherwise aristocratic profession. I thought it was an interesting departure from the normal standard of length of time at post in the post determines protocol position for ambassadors. Most New York hostesses had no idea and sort of did what they wanted, struggled with it whatever way they wanted. I think most of the diplomatic colony kind of accepted that in non-diplomatic situations and figured out they were not going to change customs for non-diplomatic New York hostesses -- how they were going to deal with this sometimes for some people vexing and always interesting issue.

*Q: How did you find initially the relations between you and when you say James Baker you really have to include his culture.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: I have the feeling that this...I've interviewed Margaret Tutwiler already but you have the feeling that here was a very effective...is in the paper today, a very effective secretary of state. However, Mr. nice is not the right term for it but more than that he had what seemed to be a rather enclosed circle that was very protective of his position. You going to the UN and you're a well-known diplomat and all. How did this work out? Let's talk about initially and maybe later on did it change?*

PICKERING: No, no I wish I could tell you it certainly; at least it changed in terms of the way the tour worked out. I thought that initially Baker was and throughout his whole period was a very sharp, very intense, very focused man. I fully respected that and I thought that he was from that perspective for a career diplomat a fine person to work with. He had very few, if little, hand-wringing qualms about what to do and where to go. I think that he was not given to small talk, very focused on business and so when he came up...and I had an opportunity to be with him and we focused on business. I made sure that he got to see the people that he needed to see and do what he needed to do. Around him was a very protective circle. I had the enormous advantage of having to work, which was a joy and a pleasure, with Bob Kimmitt. Bob is now (2008) deputy secretary of the treasury. Bob was a superb person in every way and professional in every respect. So I could always reach Bob and Bob was always available to me for conversation.

*Q: His position was...?*

PICKERING: He was under secretary of state for political affairs. My assistant secretary of state was, of course, John Bolton, and John had very different ideas about the UN. He had very different ideas about what I should be doing and to say the least it would be a terrible understatement to say that we had a tendency to disagree on all of these kinds of things. So, that presented from time to time various difficulties for me in terms of what my instructions would be. In the early days less so, and John liked to come to New York and talk to folks in New York. I can't always say that he was the kind of star hit of the season when he came up because he tended to allow some of his very negative views in the UN hang out unnecessarily. But nevertheless it was fine. We communicated and I communicated with him and with John Wolf who was his principal deputy from time to time. But I always made certain that and particularly when things got moving fast, that we stayed out ahead of the movement of events and did our best to tell Washington where we should go next and how we should move rather than wring our hands and wait for instructions. So, in a fast moving situation in New York an effective mission has to do that. I thought I always understood the policy and where it should go. I think in the end the results proved that that was the case. There were others who disagreed.

Where and when the problem would arise and this was basically in the fast moving situation with Iraq, I would often talk to Bob Kimmitt and I would talk when necessary, but rarely, to Secretary Baker, particularly where we had a difficult negotiation which I knew that he was interested in. I would say to the secretary that I thought I should talk to you, here's where we are, here's what I think I can get and here's what I don't think I can get. Please tell me what you think -- my recommendation is the following. Sometimes he would say, "I accept your recommendation, go

for it and some days he would say I've got to get a little more here and a little more there." I would say, "OK, let me move it this way or that way", but always he was very receptive, always very practical and always very easy to work with. Almost always we were able to work it out in a way that when he got involved, and I tried to do that as little as possible, I knew what he had on his platter, we managed to make an acceptable solution happen.

He was enormously valuable throughout the whole process in terms with his relationship with foreign ministers. Whenever an issue came up that looked like we needed that kind of help he and the president were always there. He and the president in effect did run the use of force resolution. It was everybody's view that this was not going to be decided by permanent representatives in New York even at the end of a tight telegraph line. Going to war is a national decision made at the highest levels and the use of force resolution reflected that. We had to do very little work on that resolution, they wanted us to do as little as possible because they had gone around and teed up with heads of state and with foreign ministers. It was through that effort where Baker went and saw every foreign minister, including having a meeting in New York with the Cubans which I attended, to make sure in fact that he had done everything he could to make sure that resolution went through. Secretary Baker was in the chair as President of the Security Council which met at the Foreign Minister level for that resolution (use of force

*Q: I don't want to pass by but since you mentioned it I may forget it otherwise. What about the Cuban meeting? This was a meeting over...*

PICKERING: Use of force.

*Q: Would the UN go to war essentially over...*

PICKERING: Would the UN authorize the use of force against Iraq?

*Q: How did this go?*

PICKERING: Well I mean, we had a meeting at the Waldorf Astoria, went in to talk to him about the importance of this and the international circumstances and he remained entirely non-committal. I mean that was the up-shot of the meeting.

*Q: Yeah. Prior to the Kuwait crisis where stood the matter I mean we had been for 40 odd years or so in a Cold War with the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union was coming apart. How did that play when you first arrived in New York?*

PICKERING: It was interesting. I think that the scene needs to be set in a couple of ways. One was that New York was not and had not been a center of serious activity on peace during the Cold War. The Security Council never functioned in any real way with exception of a few excursions. Those were rare in part because the Cold War overlay of differences with the Soviet Union. The Security Council met I think in my first couple of months one or two times. The situation was pretty slow. What had happened when I arrived was that some time before that, particularly through the hard work of my British colleague who was then Sir Crispin Tickell, the Security Council had begun to be energized by having a series of meetings among the permanent

five to deal with initially the outstanding problem of what to do about Cambodia and the Vietnamese interest in it could be worked out. That led to a series of Security Council steps to endorse and support a negotiating format in which the UN and the members of the P-5 participated. It worked and as a result produced some important and positive results. I was around for the end of that process.

Similarly the UN had tried earlier to end the Iran-Iraq war in the in the 1980s. At the end there was important resolution to try to set out the arrangements for ending that war. Then we were then engaged in an effort to see whether Afghanistan was right for that kind of discussion. So we had some P5 discussions. To my recollection they were never really very substantive or very forward moving. The Soviet representative was an older, quite almost reclusive, retiring diplomat who was open to talk but not to movement. The French permanent representative, Pierre Louis Blanc, was a Gaullist of significant proportions and had been spokesman, I think, for Charles de Gaulle at one time. Nevertheless he was approachable and certainly kept close his ties to us and the British. The Chinese was a very interesting appointment, Li Dao Yu, who later came to Washington as ambassador, who was in a generation of Chinese diplomatic leaders of stature and strength and past association with people like, the famous foreign minister of China, Chou Enlai to be well placed and effective.

So we had these conversations but nothing much emerged. The Security Council went along that way in 1989. Most of its business was passing resolutions extending this or that peacekeeping force -- pretty much resolutions that were routine without much controversy. Things that came up -- once in a while we would have a foray into the Middle Eastern problem, which was sort of the way in which whenever there was a dust-up, the Palestinians felt an opportunity to beat up on the Israeli's. They would first go to the general assembly and get the best resolution they could there. That was always much more favorable to the Palestinians and then they would come to the Security Council and see what they could eke out of the Security Council. Often we would veto, if not veto we would attempt to put the resolution in some sort of shape where we could live with it. That was always an issue of circumstances at the time, but rarely did we fail to veto if we could not get a text we liked and which treated Israel in a friendly fashion. If we couldn't which was often, then we would deal with the veto to make sure in fact that the issue never went any further. Our general objective was not to deal with the Arab Israel issue on the Security Council or the UN if we could achieve that. I think that was the main political motive, underline political motive obviously was not to put the Israelis at an extreme disadvantage which was what all these resolutions were designed to do.

*Q: Was this a period when the first intifada was...*

PICKERING: Intifada? No. The first intifada had pretty much run its course.

*Q: Run its course. But Israel's support in the world had certainly decreased after that?*

PICKERING: Quite a bit. But their support in the world didn't matter much if the U.S. was prepared to be helpful.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: At one point there was a lot of pressure for debate on the subject, so we sat through three days of debates in the Security Council on the Middle East, very productive of almost nothing constructive, just an opportunity for people to vent and an opportunity to try to use the Security Council in New York and the notoriety of the issue to get it into the press. Even then it didn't crack much in the press or '90. By 1990 it had become a more serious focus. We at some point we holding back on loan guarantees for Israel over support for settlements in the occupied territories. It was an issue I think be the end of May 26. I cast a veto. It was interesting since it coincided with a visit of the Gorbachev's in Washington. Both my wife Alice and I were both invited down. She went and tried to explain to Raisa that her husband wasn't there because I was up in the UN in New York. Raisa brushed it aside and said, "It's alright, we women are in full solidarity. Don't worry about your husband's; do what you have to do. I always do," she said.

*Q: Were you catching any from your position maybe from the Soviet at that time delegation any thought of the Gorbachev phenomenon?*

PICKERING: Oh yeah, very much so. I think that later that, of course, morphed into their willingness to work with us on Iraq in an amazing way and even more importantly Secretary Baker was building a very strong position with Shevardnadze who was the foreign minister and who was representative position with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. So that part of what we were doing with the Soviet Union was still there. But we are also was developing quite a strong, different relationship even though there were obviously still some fundamental areas of disagreement.

*Q: Well did you get any sense at this time that the original compromise of the UN was having Belarus and the Ukraine and all having these seats. Were they playing any role at all?*

PICKERING: No, no, their role was to add an extra vote to the Soviet side and while Belarus was pretty much subliminal, the Ukrainians had sent somebody who was a personality in his own right and more relatively independent. He didn't undermine the Soviet Union -- ever deviate in voting, although he took on his own, efforts to be different in expressing his views and talking with people.

*Q: What about was it ECOSOC or the...?*

PICKERING: Economic Social Council.

*Q: Oh this was the one where at this time we weren't fined were we?*

PICKERING: No UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations) is what you mean.

*Q: UNESCO is what I mean.*

PICKERING: UNESCO is in Paris.



*Q: And how, did that play any role or was that just...?*

PICKERING: No it was a UN specialized agency in Paris. We had withdrawn for what we felt were good and sufficient reasons. I forget whether we had withdrawn then or were about to withdraw. I think we had withdrawn and they had brought in yes, Federico Mayor, a Spaniard, to take it over. He had done a rather good job in cleaning it up. We weren't ready to come back if you remember. We didn't come back until the George W. Bush administration but at least it was moving along in a positive way. He had come to New York and Washington and made major efforts to begin the repairing what was necessary to get us back in.

*Q: Were there, before we move to the Iran, I mean the Kuwait or Iraq situation were there any sort of major things that you were dealing with?*

PICKERING: It's hard to believe that compared to everything that happened after August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990, much that happened before it was consequential with the exception of the fact that the Council did meet and support and worked hard to get Namibia back on track when it lurched off the rails quite a bit in the spring of 1989. That was successful less because the Council made declarations and statements and more because at the signing of deal, the U.S. and others exercised their diplomatic influence in a way that sought to get the South Africans back out of the situation and to permit the process to go ahead. Those were the complicating factors that made it very difficult and the thing sort of fell apart in the early days because people had expected would be the set of relationships in which the various players could work together. That didn't turn out to be the case. But nevertheless after Ahtisaari put together a strong peacekeeping force, got there and started working with the new government and things began to shift in a more positive direction, and within a year the process was well moving along and pretty well calmed down.

*Q: Here you are the perm rep and you got these other ambassadors, you've got a political economic section and all. I've heard some people say that down, further down the line at the UN that it got pretty frustrating sitting around the table quibbling over commas and things of this nature. Did you find that the UN was overly absorbed in details or how was it...?*

PICKERING: Well there always is that kind of conflict -- particularly with drafting exercises, which is a lot of what's done, there were always difficulties of that sort. On the other hand we did some interesting things. I think in that period since I had been engaged in it before, the Law of the Sea people in Washington were in touch with me. We worked out with them a method of in effect of taking the sting out of the Law of the Sea treaty through a process of first sending a few positive signals by changing our vote from no to abstain on some resolutions on the Law of the Sea. Then we worked very closely with the undersecretary general (Satya Nandan from Fiji) who dealt with it, to help set up a consultation mechanism in the UN in New York on the Law of the Sea -- especially on Chapter 11 which dealt with seabed mining where we had some of our greatest difficulties. Then we helped to morph that, which happened after I left, into a new negotiation on a new protocol on deep seabed mining -- a new protocol which in effect met the requirements that the United States had wanted to see in the original treaty to make it acceptable. That protocol became part of the treaty and as a result we signed it under the Clinton

administration. The problem was the Clinton administration never got it up to the Hill to get it ratified before the Senate changed against the Democrats -- so in effect we are still just a signatory -- we haven't ratified the treaty. We play a major role in the treaty but we've never ratified it. But it was an opportunity to take a treaty that was put in place with all the internal compromises and pick apart the piece that we most objected to and get it changed through a process that we organized with the help of others at the UN -- to append a new draft of this particular piece of the treaty and make it acceptable to us and to the other members.

I always thought it was an interesting example for something like the International Criminal Court, where you've got a similar treaty, a major hunk of which we object to, and which would have to be modified to get the United States on board. One of the many methods for doing that would be to organize a consultation process in New York that might come up with an alternative draft that might succeed in this process. So, it was an interesting effort in ground breaking, we had a lot of help from some very skilled people in Washington who knew this. Baker and Bush both understood what we were trying to do and gave us a green light to make it happen.

Another interesting this we did in this period of time and I can't remember exactly the timing. I had some inkling that there was a lot of interest in Washington in senior levels in ending drift net fishing. I didn't know much about drift net fishing, but all of a sudden I got a call from Senator Stevens of Alaska.

*Q: Ted Stevens being...*

PICKERING: The senior senator from Alaska. He vented with me on a number of occasions, as was his way, particularly if he was in a rather feisty mood he never let diplomatic protocol stand in his way!

*Q: He is still around and still feisty in town.*

PICKERING: I'm telling you exactly what he thought at the time, but I have a lot of respect for him. In any event he called me and he said, "You know do you think you can get a resolution in the general assembly on drift net fishing?" I said, "Let me try." I had no idea but I thought gee it's a reasonable subject let's see what we can do. So I put our team to work and within a couple of months we got a resolution on drift net fishing, which in effect ruled out drift net fishing in the high seas. The process had been depleting fishing stocks important to Alaska and thus to Senator Stevens. It was just what Ted Stevens had felt the doctor had ordered for reducing the deep sea catch of salmon before they could spawn. That was radically reducing salmon stocks for his Alaska fishermen. So a general assembly resolution made a major shift in handling that particular stock in a way that it was quite successful. So things would come along like that.

We would have problems with the treasury on economic resolutions dealing with major questions of macro-economic policy and management or development. We often had to go to bat to see what we could do, often directly with senior treasury officials, to see if we could get them to take a look at different language and different wording in order to move the question ahead. This was always a clash. I mean we were always seen by Treasury to be totally UN-oriented in our preoccupation with these issues while they were in their view totally responsible. The truth

was always somewhere in between and you know with some hard work you could get things done. Of course there was always in New York on every major issue the question of how to manage relationships with Washington and where to go with Washington.

I had a very small office in Washington and they worked on a whole set of questions for me, including mainly what was going on in many of these fields and helping members of my team out with contacts and information on the Washington scene. There was, maybe you remember because I think I said that when I talked to President Bush about the job first, he didn't want to make the UN Representative a member of the cabinet. I felt then and do now that cabinet membership for the UN could become an enormous distraction. But he did say I'll make sure you come to cabinet meetings where your subjects of interest come up and as a matter of fact I guess went to a lot of cabinet meetings. I think after a while Secretary Baker maybe felt that I shouldn't go to so many cabinet meetings. That was not a huge issue for me. But the President was always kind enough to ask what was going on at the UN and so I had a role to play. I didn't sit at the table, I sat in the row behind the table. But it was nevertheless interesting and it gave me an opportunity to mend fences and get and talk to cabinet members and to get to know those in particular who were interested in UN issues. I would use the opportunity to do that.

President and Mrs. Bush were always very open to making sure that Alice and I got involved in what were called the cabinet social events. So we got invited with the cabinet to Camp David, we got invited to attend dinners at the White House and things of that sort. These were enormously useful for me because it gave me an opportunity to talk to and relate, as I said, to cabinet officers on business issues that came up in New York. Otherwise. I would not have had the opportunity to pick up the phone and call them and say we need your help here or here is an issue coming up what do you think about it and can we do this or can we do that? So it was valuable in that sense in an unusual way.

President Bush in his first weeks came to New York to speak. He had me there and took the opportunity to point out to the audience that I was his person in NY. That kind of introduction is invaluable at the UN in particular.

*Q: Well, I think this is a good place to stop. We will pick this up again and we've talked about your various relations and issues really prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait so we will pick that up...*

PICKERING: Why can't we pick that up at that part?

*Q: That was a major one but I would also like to at some point talk about your impression of other delegations and all.*

PICKERING: I would be happy too.

*Q: To the UN at the time...*

PICKERING: That's a good subject and maybe talk about personalities at the UN.

*Q: Personalities.*

PICKERING: Maybe we can talk a little bit about UN reform steps and methods and what was going on. I would love to do all that and I might talk a little bit about relationship with the New York community and the city of New York. So let's keep those in mind.

PICKERING: We haven't talked about Iraq yet.

*Q: No we are not.*

PICKERING: Do you want to hold that off? Do you want to talk about some of these other issues?

*Q: Why don't we do that?*

*Today is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2006. Yesterday was German-Russian Friendship Day, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June. Anyway, Tom why don't we talk about in the first place relationships with New York authorities and how this worked before we move to the Iraq war?*

PICKERING: I think there were a couple aspects of that. One was that early on with my bilateral diplomatic training in mind I made an arrangement to go and call on the mayor, who was Ed Koch in those days. I had known him as a congressman. He had visited me on a couple of occasions in Israel. I knew him as someone having an aggressive interest in foreign affairs and who had not necessarily, I think, totally embraced the UN in New York as others who succeeded him had done. But he was certainly willing to accept my call, I went down, walked into the city hall building, walked upstairs, was ushered into his room. I found when we came to sit in front of the couch in his office, there was a coffee table. In the center of the coffee table were no less than thirty microphones all linked up in press conference format and immediately into the room came the thirty attachments to the microphones -- the cameras and correspondents -- and we had a conversation about the Middle East, about Israel, about the world in which Mayor Koch obviously was totally attuned to politics in New York. He took me through my paces in all the issues of interest to him, on all the ones he could wag his finger at me he did.

*Q: In a way thank God you had been an ambassador to Israel.*

PICKERING: No, no it was not above my pay grade to deal with and we had an amicable and friendly conversation. Indeed he had been so nice following that as to -when he left the job which was quite soon after that -- to invite me down with my wife, for a small personal dinner with New York friends which was very nice of him. So we had that kind of a relationship. Obviously he had his interests and I had mine and we did our best to try to let them overlap and where they couldn't overlap we had polite differences.

*Q: Tell me, I mean you know New York being such a polyglot place and you've got all these different countries represented there and they are also represented by essentially dissidents who lived in New York you know fighting for Belarus or God know what.*

PICKERING: Let's talk about the kind of New York part; let's talk about the character of the missions because there was another piece of the New York part. I guess Ed Koch was succeeded by David Dinkins and Mayor Dinkins was also enormously friendly to the UN. He invited me up to a lot of meetings at his house in which he entertained visiting people from the UN many of whom I had known. As an African American he was particularly interested in Africa. I had spent a lot of time in Africa. I didn't become a personal advisor but an attendee at a number of events that he had. It was useful to have the mayor pay attention to the UN, to the US Mission to the UN and to the UN ambassador because it helped with the New York community. New York was then predominantly a Democratic city and Mayor Dinkins represented that. As a result, the kind of politics, which were, despite the fact that I represented a Republican President good friends. It was a congenial arrangement. There was not a political divide in that sense. New Yorkers liked the UN in general and saw it as a benefit to the city. That was true the higher up in New York you got. Lower down it was a problem. It was a traffic difficulty, the president whenever he visited created a snarl up. All these other people came -- heads of state -- and shut the city down for at least a week in September when the UN General Assembly started and the general debate began. New Yorkers were used to that, they understood it but the traffic say from 60<sup>th</sup> Street down to 34<sup>th</sup> Street and certainly east of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue for a week or more became totally impossible. They learned to live with it but they never learned to love it.

There was another aspect to that and that was, that like the Department of State, the US Mission to the UN in New York had a special section, which dealt with the diplomatic corps. It was headed by a former New York policeman for...

*Q: Did you say it was a former New York policeman who sort of handled the...*

PICKERING: Yes and essentially this had everything to do with the recognition of their diplomatic immunities -- relations with the city of New York, a lot of it had to do with tickets for traffic offences. The New York city police were pretty assiduous. There was at that point a growing movement on the part of the Department of State to enforce summons for traffic offenses to the greatest extent that they could. Everybody had immunity and we had to recognize that. The UN obviously protected that, but one day I had an extra ordinary event I got a very irate call from a very proper and very meticulous French ambassador who before I could say anything to him announced to me over the phone in French that he would no longer attend Security Council meetings until I got his car back from the New York policemen who had towed it away. The former New York policeman in charge of the section did yeoman duty for us, got the car back. Apparently, the driver had left it parked in a bad place and did not stay with the car. I also thought that there was a from time to time a particular attention on the part of the New York police at least to certain delegations. But I also asked the French ambassador where had the car been parked. Apparently, it had been double parked in a place where it had been a serious obstruction to traffic and so I said to him, "I hope that in the future his driver could do a better job of protecting his vehicle from the New York police."

But there were those kinds of things that went on. There was a whole range of things that had to do with taxation, diplomatic immunity, properties and things of that sort which would normally have been carried forward in Washington by the office of protocol and in New York office that had then been set up to deal with the diplomatic corps. We did all of that in New York at the

mission. To the extent we could help solve those problems quickly we built good will for ourselves and the US. So it may seem trivial to take time to talk about it, but it was important in the long run, like a lot of other things we did to try to assure that when we need votes and support we had set the stage for it by building good will with delegations from all regions and areas.

*Q: Did you find that there was some countries represent that were particularly oblivious or disrespectful you might say or common courteous as regarding parking?*

PICKERING: Generally, New York is impossible for parking and so the standard for disrespect has to be pretty high to come to public notice. Most of them were OK. We had missions, Congo in particular in those days, that were unfunded by their governments. They got in arrears and we had landlord problems and things of that sort that we had to be pretty draconian about suggesting they get paid up. Occasionally, non-governmental NGOs (non-governmental organizations) would try to help mission's deal with those problems through financial support to help bide them over the time before they were going to get their next check from home. So there were things of that sort that came up from time to time. There were people who abused their servants and this got to my attention. We had to talk to foreign missions about this and do what we could to protect the servants under the law even though they were working in immune establishments. That always raised problems. But there were a whole series of these kinds of things that this section worked tirelessly on and in general provided good advice and great support.

I knew that my work in the UN was like that in a state legislature in the US often determined by votes. I had the opportunity to use a number of devices to build personal relationships which often counted when votes came up in the general assembly and its various committees. I spent time in the delegate's lounge meeting and talking to other perm reps. There was at that time a small group of first class representatives from small countries who were often the leaders and movers and shakers on issues of concern to us. Their friendship and cooperation was in part measured by the personal relationship we could develop with them and they were grateful for time spent with them by the US perm rep in NY. We had a number of representatives of very small states, many of them islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific, I made it a practice to try to call on all the perm reps in my first months there. For those I could not get to individually, I invited them in sub-regional groups to my apartment for drinks and conversation. They came and we then had a relationship which I could cultivate through a word in the hallways or a chance meeting in the delegate's lounge or dining room. Some of the small Caribbean island representatives I was told were also driving taxis in Brooklyn. As a kind of joke I told my political section I wanted to be sure they had made contact and if we needed their vote at a critical time, I was ready to rent the taxi for a morning or a day!

We had a legal advisor in the mission whose principal work was to deal with foreign affairs questions and particularly legal and procedural issues around Security Council and general assembly. It was Bob Rosenstock, now deceased. Bob was an absolutely invaluable person in the mission. He had years of experience and Bob was always available to talk to me about our strategy in the Council and what had worked and what had not worked and what kinds of legal issues might come up. He was a fountain of knowledge about what had happened in the past and

how we had reacted and what the precedent was and what could or could not be done. So he was an important part obviously of my team.

*Q: I would think that particularly the United Nations was a long history of resolution after resolution you would want to cross the thing that bothers every foreign service mission but the continuity to understand...*

PICKERING: He did.

*Q: But so many of these things had long historical roots and they weren't going to go away I mean...*

PICKERING: And we had a small research office at the mission of several people who had been there for years and who were absolutely invaluable because they could comb the UN documents and get us precedents, talk to us about what had happened in the past, keep us filled in. Of course, a number of my staff members had been there for years, had been civil servants over a long period of time and intended to stay at the mission. So we had this combination -- a good blend of continuity and rotating people.

The third aspect of the city of New York as we go along on that was that New Yorkers, and particularly what I would call the movers and shakers in the world of business and finance and in the press, were generally interested in the UN and friendly to the UN. New York in a sense is a city with a wide range of eclectic interests and the UN was among them. So those people that were interested entertained most of us at the UN socially and mixed us in with the rest of New York. I established a pattern wherever I could in entertaining UN people to do my best to get them to meet New Yorkers by bringing in New Yorkers to the event. It thought it was good for them, it was good for the UN and it was good for New York.

I remember a call for me from a UN colleague on how important their relationship was with Mr. X or Mrs. Y or Mrs. Z in the New York establishment, which was very large, and obviously one couldn't meet all their special needs. But it was a kind of valuable perch from that point of view - the U.S. mission and the U.S. representative was able to help bring those things together. It helped obviously to develop our relationship with key missions and they counted it highly in terms of their relationships. The UN ambassadors were grateful for introductions. Then they went off and developed the contacts on their own.

I think it also meant a lot in technical terms at least. I was the highest ranking federal official in the city of New York. The UN ambassador is and so the New Yorkers generally would invite you to official things where they wanted federal representation. I didn't have any money to offer them and New York is full of federal officials and many of great significance and no one ever created a coordinating council or anything of that. But the folks at the Federal Bureau of Investigation would invite me down to talk to their agents occasionally about what was going on at the UN. So we established all of the usual range of contacts that one does, but it was unusual working in that kind of city arrangement.

We also had some tax benefits that we could exploit, things like our entertaining which were difficult to manage. I had a small protocol office that became adept at understanding what could be done. This included occasionally having the capability of tapping customs confiscated liquor supplies for government entertaining. Generally speaking when it got to us it wasn't very attractive stuff.

Of course, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, as I may have mentioned this, is provided with a quite nice residence on the 42nd floor -- the top inhabited floor of the Waldorf Towers. In a very nice apartment with good entertaining space, reasonable living space -- if you had more than a small family it would be a little cramped. If you had a large family it would be really cramped but for a husband and wife it was more than adequate and we even had guest space. It was very nicely furnished. I arrived there after Ambassador Walters left and he had become very enamored of the Wyeth family art and had managed to borrow...

*Q: Andrew and his brother.*

PICKERING: picture by Andrew, Jamie and the others and left me in the apartment three very magnificent Wyeth's. One of which we found was worth multiple millions of dollars and was sitting there uninsured. In any event one of them was a very large pig, which was not a particularly gracious presentation for Muslim or Jewish guests in the apartment so we did arrange after a while, even though we loved the paintings and we had them for about six months, but we arranged with the original donor to retrieve them. He was quite put out with us that we didn't really want these magnificent paintings around but he wouldn't give us a choice, we had to take the pig with everything or else because he loved that pig picture or we had to let it all go. So with some reluctance we let that all go and went back to Art In Embassies, which provided us with some wonderful paintings for the apartment borrowed from in part AT&T headquarters in the Chippendale building up on 57<sup>th</sup> St which had been completed but never occupied.

But those were the kind of New York pieces but let's pick up on and maybe talk a little bit about delegations and how they are organized.

*Q: Well before we talk about New York how about things like the Armenian Liberation army or whatever it is called, the Jewish Defense league and all. I mean were these, I mean there are groups that are quite vocal and sometimes quite dangerous.*

PICKERING: In my time we were not bothered by these groups so much as the fact that they were there. My two immediate predecessors who had been both political appointees had had varying degrees of intensive security. They were both public names that were well known m-Jeanne Kirkpatrick and Dick Walters. I made it a point and was able to drop a lot of that impedimenta. We had a security guard when I arrived who sat at a desk in front of the apartment entrance. Shortly after I arrived on the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor, they announced to me that the Waldorf was installing fire protection and doing some other things and that the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor was next to be treated. So I was moved down onto the 32<sup>nd</sup> floor to another very, very nice apartment courtesy of the Waldorf while they put sprinklers in our apartment. But they put the desk for the guard at an angle in the hall, we were down another corridor quite remotely placed from the elevators. I awoke one morning and went out to the elevator which was way down the other end of the hall



from the security post and saw in the mirror facing the end of the hall a nice round bullet hole. So I asked how that had happened. Well, it turned out that our security guard had been “cleaning” his weapon and unfortunately discharged it down the hall. I said, “Well I thought that probably the value of that particular security post had diminished in comparison with its risk to Waldorf guests and it ought to be removed.” So for most of my time we got by without that. Occasionally they would deploy a uniformed officer when we had a party, to control the crowd. But we got along very well thank you without a lot of security.

The security folks got worried when I started to walk back and forth to work which was a total of about ten blocks in New York City. You could vary your route every day -- it was very easy, everything was in a grid pattern so you could walk down one way and up another. They decided they would assign me a State Department security officer to walk with me to protect me against whomever. They had no real threats but this went along for a while until it got hard for the guy to get in from Garden City in time to walk with me to work and then that slacked off.

The one time for me when a security function was absolutely essential was when the President came to town. Without a security officer there was no way that I could get any way near the meetings I had to attend.

The UN security people were always very pleasant. They made a habit in those days of memorizing faces as quickly as they could so they knew almost all of the permanent representatives by face. The U.S. occupies a particularly important position in New York at the UN because we are the host country. So as the host country, we generally got some kind of special precedence and treatment in an informal way at meetings or gatherings. This is accepted and recognized by most people. Permanent members of the Security Council also enjoy a little bit of extra oomph in a kind of protocol sense. We try hard not to exert that -it was never necessary to do so but it was a value in a pinch. You were recognized more frequently by people and generally could get access to where you were going at the UN or when New York had to shut down for the general assembly opening week.

*Q: OK, do you want to talk about some of the delegations and how they operate?*

PICKERING: Sure, and I should say maybe just to fill in and why don't we just wind this up. To fill in on your other question none of these organizations in my mind ever targeted us for a threat, but occasionally when the folks thought that we were getting close to being looked at I would get a little more security for a short period of time and then it would die away. On the other hand, a number of these organizations that related to groups and institutions where we didn't have relations and then later at the end of the Cold War we developed relations, for example Albania, which chose not to be represented in the U.S., it was interesting that I would usually be invited when we established relations to a party at their UN mission where no American official had ever been before. From all over the United States would come out of the woodwork Albanian Americans. The Albanian organizations were very happy to see that their old country and the U.S. had now patched things up and they could come out of the closet and talk. It was fascinating to see this kind of ethnic slice of America that had in one way or another been suppressed by Cold War inattention.

*Q: Well did, was there any, do you have any judgment about how well some of the delegations worked the system? And others didn't?*

PICKERING: Sure, let me start off with that and then I will have to break. Maybe one more answer to the question. I think that with respect to delegations obviously the big players lavished time and attention on their missions and on their leadership. It was generally pretty effective. They thought highly enough of the UN particularly as it began to recover through the Gulf War to see it as a locus where serious damage could be done to their national interests if they didn't pay attention and some serious gains might be made if they did put good people in strong missions.

The other interesting thing was that many smaller countries tended to try to choose their star performers. So many of them in the US parlance punched well above their weight. A lot of them were particularly effective in the regional groups or in the group of 77 of the non-aligned. So at various times over the history of the UN quite small countries have lent very important individuals to the New York scene who themselves become significant players both in the UN as a whole, This came often through climbing up through their regional group and the G-77 where they assumed leadership and could be very influential on a lot of subjects. They turned out to be some of the major players and it was particularly true in the general assembly. The election of individuals to the Security Council left Africa as one of the more widely represented regions in terms of non-permanent members, usually with three representatives. They coordinated well but depending upon who they were, and they were not chosen because they had a sterling leader of great capabilities, but because it was their turn in the rotation of alphabetical order which the regional group had previously decided. It was not their objective to put their most important people forward in the Security Council. But in the general assembly where everybody was represented, their star players had a particularly important role. Some pretty good folks in terms of their effectiveness, not necessarily in an enlightened appreciation of U.S. interests, were chosen to be leaders in particular areas. You worked with those people and to some extent some of the then passing Cold War environment led to a diminution in what I would call the Cold War induced confrontational nature of our relationship with the non-aligned. So some of that was fading away but maybe we can talk about that the next time.

*Q: We can talk about that the next time.*

PICKERING: Sorry to bring you here for a short excursion.

*Q: No, no, no and one of the things that I point out at the end here is we haven't talked about the Kuwait/Iraqi business and all.*

PICKERING: Sure.

*Q: But maybe you might at some point talk about on a typical day kind of what you would do, how you worked and how you would get your people to work the system to further whatever kind of further.*

PICKERING: We talk about that in kind of both.

*Q: Great. OK, two other things. I wonder if you could talk about the issue of permanent representations, Security Council for Germany and for Japan, perhaps India had just come up and what were the thoughts at the time and also our relations with international organizations at the State Department and how being in the UN in New York was different than being the ambassador in X country with your back-up back in Washington.*

*OK, today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2006. Tom, I had a bunch of things and then maybe the Kuwait thing would be the...should we do the Kuwait thing first?*

PICKERING: Sure. That was the big issue when I was there. I think we've talked a little bit about it in past sessions so there may be some redundancy.

*Q: Sure.*

PICKERING: On August 1, 1990 Saddam Hussein of Iraq invaded Kuwait with some 40 plus divisions. He took control in one day. The lead up had been in part a dispute about whether Kuwait would continue to fund Iraq to cover war debts left over from the then terminated 8-year war between Iraq and Iran. Other issues were differences over oil prices and at rock bottom a long standing Iraqi unhappiness that Kuwait had been separated by the British from Iraq as they saw it and made a protectorate in its own right. The Iraqis considered it the 19<sup>th</sup> province of their country

I would say that the Kuwait issue had for us three principal phases and then a follow on. So to put it in context in an analytical sense -- the opening phase, which began with the Iraqi invasion, which took place on August 1, 1990 lasted until the end of the passage of the resolution of the use of force which I believe was the end of November, maybe November 29, 1990. This was a phase of intensive Security Council activity and I will talk about that in a minute.

Then there was a quiet phase, but it was a fairly defensive phase between the passage of use of force resolution passage and the opening of conflict, I think, on January 17, 1991. And the third phase went then to end of that conflict sometime in March or April in which the Security Council activities were much less intensive, basically defensive damage limitation kinds of efforts and I will talk about that. Then there was the post conflict phase which was at the end of the war and which was addressed principally in Resolution 687 which was called the mother of all resolutions. It was a three-part resolution that dealt with in effect putting into place a cease fire via a United Nations resolution. It put a lot of requirements on Iraq as the party defeated in the aggression. Iraq had to assume onerous responsibilities as a result of the use of the mandatory powers of the Security Council, including an inspection mechanism among many other things. The post war phase included for the first time in a broad sense the use of the Security Council as a war termination mechanism. In the past, resolutions supporting the end of a conflict were closely related to the negotiated terms between the parties. This one was a fiat created in the security council which imposed the terms on Iraq with no Iraqi participation in the process at all except to argue about it at the security council table.

Then the follow up phase was basically focused right on through to the second Gulf War and some of that took place while I was there in late '91 and early '92. The effort was to use the Security Council as a reinforcement mechanism to assure that Saddam complied with the resolutions and where there were ambiguities and uncertainties to use the Council as a method of clarifying what it was the Council really required of Saddam. It was, in effect, an effort to try to strengthen, support and further impose upon Saddam the post-conflict regime. Everybody had believed or hoped it would lead to a situation in which Saddam would either wither away, disappear, or behave. The latter being an option which was in most people's view highly unlikely. So, let me now go and try to address these in sequence to give some thoughts on the activity.

As I think I said earlier on the tapes, the Security Council had really rarely met in early 1990. Then it had focused only on two or three significant issues in my time at the UN beginning roughly at the end of February 1989 up until August of 1990. It had met and worked on the Namibia crisis in 1989 which it looked like all the negotiations would come undone. With the help of many parties and some action on the part of the Security Council, things got back on track. It had overseen and blessed and worked on a Cambodian settlement which was coming along. That in part came out of a UK-initiated effort to try to bring the permanent five members of the Security Council closer together to work on solving big issues. That was an important precedent for the first phase of Iraq-Kuwait in particular.

I was in the region in the end of June -- in the Middle East at the end of June 1990 -- as part of a trip I made to visit members of the Security Council and other important states. The purpose was to gear up for potentially more intensive activities in the Security Council beginning about the time of the general assembly reconvened in mid-September in 1990. This kind of a trip of standard activity for the U.S. representative to the UN.

*Q: The U.S. representative does go out in the field to kind of check with the foreign ministries, is that...?*

PICKERING: Often, you know it sort of depends on what else is going on and if New York becomes consuming I think then it is less easy to get away to travel. Certainly at the time I was in New York in 1989 and 1990, there was time to do that. I did it on several occasions over the years. It was a kind of standard operating procedure.

I went to Saudi Arabia and saw the foreign minister and then went to Kuwait and saw the foreign minister. I think we had a brief interview with the Emir, saw the prime minister and the deputy prime minister and the oil minister. In Kuwait the mood was basically we are under a lot of pressure from the Iraqis to negotiate a price hike on oil. We think that is unwise and Saudi Arabia had confirmed it. The Saudis thought it was unwise to see prices move up well into the 20s. It is kind of an ironic concern now. As a result, Kuwait was holding out, it was very clear that the Iraqi's were very intent on trying to collect some more money. They had huge debts, billions of dollars, coming out of the war with Iran. Some of them debts were to people not ready to cancel them -- the French and the Russians. Interestingly also some of them to the Arabs, which I think Iraqis felt that they could easily slough off, while the Arabs, treated them as debts and as loans which they expected to have repaid. The Iraqi's said that they were brotherly help

from a friendly foreign Arab power to make sure that Iraq survived the war with Iran and did what it could to win it.

All of that set the stage then for a surprise to all of us late in the day in August the 1<sup>st</sup> when I was informed by the State Department that Iraq had invaded Kuwait. The invasion was almost complete by then and that I was instructed to call a Security Council meeting right away. That was an occasion in which I was at a dinner with my departing British colleague Sir Crispin Tickell and his wife hosted by the late Tom Enders and his wife at a New York hotel. I was called out of the dining room by the waiter to take an urgent call in a corridor leading to the kitchen from the State Department. I took it in the pantry with all the waiters running around. I talked to Bob Kimmitt and we spoke a little bit about the character of the resolution they were working on for the security council in New York. We shut down the dinner and I called immediately the Romanian who was relatively new and this was his first time as president of the Security Council. This was the first day of the month in which he had become president; it is a monthly rotating office. So he was quite surprised and I suggested that he get in touch with the UN secretariat right away and get them to mobilize a meeting. The Security Council is supposed to meet on hourly notice, this was 10:00 at night, we were lucky if we could probably get going by midnight or later.

In the meantime we also alerted the rest of my team, but I wanted to find the Kuwaiti ambassador who was a personal friend and whom I had heard from his household staff was having a social engagement hosted by the permanent representative from Bahrain. I called Bahrain and I talked to his 10-year old daughter who was a very sharp young lady and said, "Oh yes, they are at the Russian Tea Room up on 57<sup>th</sup> Street, you can find them there, right next to Carnegie Hall." So I called the Russian Tea Room and, of course, the Kuwaiti was shocked but understood that it was serious and that we were ready to go into the Security Council. He had to regroup his forces because he would have to carry some of the weight in the meeting. He was not a member of the council but obviously parties to an international dispute being covered by the council and get a seat at the table and are expected to make statements. So he got going on his side of the issue.

In the meantime too we began to think about a resolution further with Washington. We called for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and threatened sanctions if this didn't happen. This became Resolution 660, which was the first in a series of resolutions that follow along right until Resolution 678, which was the use of force resolution. There were about a dozen of these resolutions that related to Kuwait and all of them in one way or another were important. We passed that resolution sometime in the very early morning, I think around four or so or four-thirty and I went back home to try and get a little sleep.

Brent Scowcroft called and said the president wanted me to come down to a meeting he was calling of the National Security Council to discuss the issue. I got an early plane down and we met fairly early in the morning over the White House in the Cabinet room. It was an interesting session because it was very clear to me that at that our focus, as it should have been, but perhaps more exclusively than I expected to see it, was on defending Saudi Arabia and obviously the oil from Saudi Arabia on the assumption that we had lost Kuwait. My recollection was that this impression came both out of the military and intelligence briefings I heard at the meeting and

some of the discussion -- that we needed to focus now on how to make sure that we protected Saudi oil and made sure that Saddam didn't move against Saudi Arabia.

I spoke up near the end of the meeting at an appropriate occasion, I think I was the only one to do so, and said that, "I thought the credibility of the president's foreign policy in the region hinged on our being able to make a commitment to liberate Kuwait. We had really no other alternative. Letting Kuwait go down the drain in effect meant that the support that we had given for the states in the region, their sovereignty and indeed to protect the very considerable oil supplies from Kuwait, would be seen as weakened if not discarded. We could not allow the creation of a precedent for a continued kind of Iraqi gobbling up of other states and territories in the region. That required that we be very firm on this and I felt it was significant to draw the line on recovering Kuwait." I didn't get much of a reaction. Obviously some people noticed it, because it later appeared, not at my instigation, in some of the books on the subject. The president went off to Aspen that day. We later found out, met with Maggie Thatcher who also pushed very hard on this line and she was more successful I think than I was because the two announced their objective of liberating Kuwait. She was not very enthusiastic however about the UN or using it. He was much more in favor....

*Q: She was the one, what was her famous phrase?*

PICKERING: "Don't go wimpy on me now George", or something like that

*Q: Wobbly I think.*

PICKERING: Wobbly, yes. Don't go wobbly now on me George. In any event by Aspen in the afternoon they had a joint press conference in which it was done. I later talked to Henry Catto who was ambassador to the UK then and actually had the meeting in his house in Aspen. He described in effect the parts he saw, I don't think he saw it all because some of it was alone, but in effect it was I think through fairly tough work on the part of Prime Minister Thatcher with the president that they both reached the conclusion that we had to take on the liberation of Kuwait part of the problem as well as the defense of Saudi Arabia. Both in my view were important.

I think that very quickly Saddam allowed it to be known that he wasn't going to withdraw and establish a kind of *status quo ante*. So we then went into a mode of passing sanctions resolutions at the UN against the Iraqi and obviously shutting down all weapons trade and things of that sort. We did it in the Security Council in the mode in which the Security Council, by referring to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, operates in a way that is considered by all states to be binding under the Charter. Much depends on obviously on how anxious they are to observe the binding character of the resolution as to whether they do so. Most however do. International juridical opinion pretty broadly supports that interpretation -- that when the Security Council speaks about acting under Chapter VII of the Charter that in fact makes it binding internationally on all states, most of which don't participate in the Council at all. Successive resolutions were all passed in the binding mode. That was very unusual because up until then it was my understanding, I'm not a historian of the Council, the Council rarely used the mandatory provisions. But with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and indeed the public reaction, it was fairly

clear that the Council had to act and should be acting in fairly tough manner with respect to Iraq as an aggressor state.

There were differing views in the region in those early days. Some including in particular Jordan thought that there was a negotiated solution possible. They pressed for negotiations for a solution. King Hussein, and I later talked to him about it, thought that because the Council had moved so precipitously as a result of American pressure, it had blocked the possibility for a negotiated solution. Saddam used that as a reason to Hussein for not wanting to negotiate. The speed was in part pushed by a concern about a military move by Iraq into Saudi Arabia which was not well defended then. Hussein may have been depending more on hope. Jordan had over the previous eight years gotten very close to Iraq. It was through Jordan indeed that most of the military supplies from outside arrived in Iraq to support the war against Iran. It was Jordan that reaped the benefits obviously of all that transit trade. It was Jordan too that had the most to lose if Saddam became an international pariah. It was also clear to me having spent a lot of time in Jordan, that the Iraqi's were obviously also trying to use Jordan. Jordan had perhaps up to 4-500 thousand Iraqi's at one point or another taking refugee from the war but also spending money there.

*Q: And there was a Palestinian group still...*

PICKERING: There was and the Palestinians and Arafat opted more for the Iraqi side in this conflict than with the Kuwaiti side. That put them more than in the dog house, particularly with the Western world if not entirely with the Arab world. Saudi Arabia was shocked and obviously very much concerned about its future. They stayed very close to us because the military response of the United States was to begin sending forces to Saudi Arabia to defend the country against another Iraqi move. Later those forces became the heart of the effort to liberate Kuwait.

What happened then was that we developed a routine in the security council as we moved from the first resolution seeking immediate withdrawal very quickly to the sanctions resolutions and then to following on. It became very much my view in New York we had to keep the Security Council dealing with Iraq on a daily basis if we were going to be successful in mobilizing it. I don't think that was ever really disputed in Washington. We needed to keep the Security Council moving because eventually we might need it to authorize the international coalition to use force to liberate Kuwait ...

*Q: Was that rather early a...*

PICKERING: Early on it became obvious that were the sanctions to fail, and nobody hoped that they would, but I think everybody felt that given the bloody mindedness of Saddam that their chances for success were certainly not above even and less than that. Therefore you had to guard against a failure of sanctions. So what we did after two or three resolutions was to develop a routine.

Point number one was that when it looked like we were ready to get a resolution voted on, we had already begun to look for what the next resolution would have to be. We were never left, I

think, searching for a subject, because Saddam would do something one way or another that would give us an obvious opportunity for the next resolution,

The second thing was that I discussed this first with the British, they with the French and then the three of us very early on, as to what the next resolution should be -- to decide on what it was. We would then start working on the text with Washington, London, and Paris. A lot of the text went down, if you could put it that way, from New York and the final texts were generally a blend. Washington over a period of time fell into this routine and began working with London quite closely to make sure in fact that we stayed all on one sheet of music. A lot to this was accompanied with presidential phone calls and secretarial phone calls to all the players which were enormously valuable to getting quick results.

We also did develop a routine, if I could put it that way, for the construction and passage of resolutions. That required British, U.S., French agreement on a text in New York as the next step. We then moved that text into the P5 and presented it in a meeting to the Russians and the Chinese. They knew without having to ask that the British, French and we were in agreement on the text, but we were there to talk to them, to accept their changes, to sound them out on what they could sell to move the process along. We wanted the next step to be P5 unity on the text. P5 unity in that sense meant either that the P5 would all vote for this text or if they would not all vote for this text, none of them would veto. The Chinese would usually sit on the fence, but make it clear that this was not a text they would veto, but then never quite commit themselves to vote for it until they could extract all the juice they wanted out of what they thought they needed either in the way of textual changes or seeing it sold to the other members of the Security Council including the non-aligned.

At the time we were moving in the P5, once we had a pretty clear view that this would sell in the P5. we would begin to talk to our other close allies among the non-permanent members of the Security Council, usually the western Europeans -- in the early periods Belgium and Canada. They were very close NATO allies and carried some of the burden. We did not want to be on the other side of the fence. Their ideas were important to consider. Those contacts were done often bilaterally, often at the working level and often through a process in which we used members of the political section to work closely with their opposite numbers. Then if there was a necessity, we would also work at the top of their delegations or occasionally if we needed to their capitals but that usually went pretty well and we had rarely to go above the working level. But they understood that these were issues on which we wanted their views as well as their support. On a number of occasions they had some interesting ideas to add to the resolution and so by the time it got through the P5 we would have done at least that preliminary consultation.

The next step was to take it...

*Q: I would like to just talk about one step. From the initiation how about the French because often the French take a contrarian view I mean they...*

PICKERING: The French weren't, in my view, wildly contrarian on this issue. They had, were changing permanent representatives Pierre Louis Blanc who was a Gaullist had been spokesman for Charles de Gaulle, was leaving and Jean Bernard Merimee, the grandson of the author, had



come in. Jean Bernard was a more congenial individual in the sense that he was less steeped in traditional Gaullist ethic. He was an easier fellow to talk to and was very helpful to us in persuading France to come along. But, France in no way in those days wished to exploit Iraqi aggression for any narrow French advantage. They worked with us on the question, consulted with us extensively and were usually helpful with say the Francophone Africans that looked to the French also for lead on this. So that worked reasonably well and we had relatively few difficulties and hiccups in that area but the effort was always keep the door open and make sure in fact that we weren't going to have any hiccups and to make sure in fact that they were early-on consulted and had a role in telling us what they thought they wanted to do and in planning this.

The early stages of the process come in a regular talk first thing in the morning with David Hannay who was my UK opposite number after Crispin Tickell left. We would talk about where we were going next and what kinds of elements should be in the next resolution and how to move ahead. Because of the EU connection, David talked more frequently with Jean Bernard than I did. I would often rely on David given the time and the pressure to pick up with Jean Bernard and come back to me and say that Jean Bernard's ok and that it looks like Paris is ok or we both need to go talk with Jean Bernard, or we need to work on this particular piece or that particular piece of the text. So there was that very informal view and then we would have a sometimes-tripartite meeting and then we would have the five meeting and then we would take the resolution to the next stage.

The next stage was to introduce it to the seven non-aligned members of the Security Council -- in those days, essentially the Latin's who included Brazil and I forget whom else. -- the Africans, Ivory Coast was among them. Yemen was a member, Cuba was a member. Cuba was the other Latin American, at least at the beginning of 1991. In any event, Asian members -- Malaysia was involved and played an important role in the Council.

What I would do with some of these resolutions was, particularly if they were difficult, I would have personally a bilateral or trilateral with the French speaking Africans in a side room before we presented it to the non-aligned group. We would go through the resolution, we would do it in French with them so that they were comfortable with the text and understood what it meant and had their questions answered. They always appreciated this and felt that we went out of our way to do this kind of high level consultation with them. They were on board and we had a lot of success in working that side of the street.

But the culmination of that phase would be the presentation of the text in the informal meeting room of the Security Council to the seven non-aligned, which we sort of appropriated for the purpose. Collectively of course they had a veto because you need nine out of fifteen positive votes to pass a resolution. It would always be never be less or more than four of the P5 to make the presentation. Almost exclusively it was the Chinese who didn't attend, but with the four of us there the politics was such that they knew in fact that the Chinese were on board or we wouldn't be there. The Chinese usually were pretty faithful and would not try to undermine us on those kinds of things. The way in which we did it was one of us would present the text and talk them through it. Then we would collect their comments and ideas. If we could and it was important, we would accept on the spot the changes that we knew we could buy. -- if they were not

deleterious to the resolution and helped us out. For the tougher ones we would consider it, sometimes seek alternatives and if necessary tell them we would need to refer to capitals and then get back to them. Sometimes we would go back to the proposer and say well, "This one has the following disadvantages, we don't see any way that we can make it fit. Can you live with the resolution the way it is or can we make another change that will get at the same problem in a different way?" But we attempted very hard to be accommodating because those folks were important to us and to some extent it worked pretty well.

Then when the text was set, we would tell them what our deadline was for passage and when we wanted to get the final text out.

In the UN there is a process where if the co-sponsors agree to put the text in blue type that meant that you were aiming for and had the right to call for a formal meeting within 24 hours to vote up or down on its passage. So at a certain point we would put the text in blue. It didn't mean that it was non-negotiable after that. It just meant that we were using time pressure as another diplomatic way to bring this text to conclusion. We would do that basically once we felt we had enough of a consensus, but we would continue to work for more votes. Going into blue usually meant by our count that there were not six votes against it out of the 15 which would mean it would fail of the necessary nine to pass as a resolution. It also meant that there was no veto pending. We would use the remaining time to seek to bring as many on board as we could because this was an exercise in some ways as much in public diplomacy as it was in diplomatic efforts to mandate actions on the part of Iraq. So these roles kind of got mixed and played in to this particular set of activities. In most of the resolutions we would get a minimum of 12 votes and in a lot of them we got 14 or 15 votes. So the folks that we had to worry about were essentially Cuba, Yemen and China in the Council particularly in the later days,

There were a couple of other interesting events. One of those had to do with one of the first resolutions long before the use of force resolution at the end of November, but which predicated a narrow use of force against Iraqi tankers which had left Iraq in contravention of the blockade, carrying fuel, carrying oil. They were seemingly headed for the open ocean coming down the Persian Gulf. It was the view of everybody a violation of the blockade so what were we going to do about it. We had proposed a resolution, which would allow the naval forces of the coalition

*Q: This is Tape 13 Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: We had proposed a resolution, which would allow the naval forces of the coalition to board and take control of these tankers. We didn't say use force as I remember, but it was clearly implied.

*Q: Had a coalition been established?*

PICKERING: The coalition had been established from the beginning because we had, in effect, a whole series of countries willing to contribute troops or moving troops to defend Saudi Arabia and which had begun to coordinate around the U.S. military commander. Staffs were being set up and all of that was going on. This was, I think, in the middle of the second week of August when this resolution came up. I had been out at Aspen. There was a dyspeptic Canadian press

conference earlier in the week about the U.S. seeming to move away from the use of the Security Council. I came back partly for this resolution, assured my Canadian friends we were staying on board and in the meantime discovered through the State Department that yes indeed our military guys wanted to go capture these tankers this regardless of whether we had a Security Council resolution or not. I said to Bob Kimmitt and to the people working on the resolution, "Please tell the Secretary I can get this resolution in 24-hours and that we need the time to do that. But that's not going to lose these tankers. However, if we don't get the resolution, we walk away from the Security Council, we will have walked away from all of the support this huge anchor that we have built gives us, the whole juridical business that gave in effect, a strong basis in legitimacy internationally in what we were doing. It would begin to pull p apart in the coalition including some of the Arabs we wanted to have on the ground with us in Saudi Arabia. We were working hard to bring in units of 300 Salvadorians and 15 Guatemalans in all in order to build up strength in the coalition, the usual thing that goes on.

So they came back right away and said OK we can wait. In the meantime I had a couple of problems. One of those, I think, was Yemen. The Yemeni's were brought on board by our saying to the Yemeni's 'yes indeed we would see as a favorable outcome of this if these two tankers went into a port in Yemen and stayed there forever, as long as the blockade was on. So the Yemeni's came back and said they were prepared to do that. We kind of worked that as a political way of dealing with this into the resolution.

In the meantime it was interesting because very early in the summer I had been to a party in which someone had shown me the newest cell phone and the old cell phones were like big bricks.

*Q: Big walkie-talkies.*

PICKERING: Well big walkie-talkies and this guy had this little thing with a fold up top that we've all seen, the father of the grandfather of the great grandfather of all modern cell phones. It was a mobile thing; it was a little fat with a fat battery. I said to the folks at the U.S. Mission, "I don't care what it costs, I'm going to need this. This is an absolutely indispensable instrument for diplomacy." They said, "Well it costs \$500 now, it will come down later." I said, "Get it now, it will work." So I had this wonderful opportunity in a private meeting with the Yemeni ambassador who had become a good friend. He and I had reestablished relations that spring between the U.S. and South Yemen and then within six weeks the two Yemen's had joined together. He had then become the Yemeni permanent representative for the new united Yemen. So I said to him, "Here, take my cell phone and call your foreign minister and get permission right away, this won't wait, this is coming to a conclusion." So he borrowed my cell phone and called his foreign minister and got permission there with me in the room to support the resolution by going through all of the stuff that we had given him. So it was an interesting way to kind of promote diplomacy.

*Q: Of course today it's now the...*

PICKERING: Standard practice.

*Q: What was the Iraqi representation? Was he completely isolated or did he have a group around him or she? What happened?*

PICKERING: No it was a guy who had been ambassador here in DC. He had succeeded the famous Ambassador Hamdun who had gone back to Iraq and become a vice minister. His name was Al-Anbari and I had quite good relations before the invasion. They, of course, soured immediately, but Al-Anbari was always pushed by the Iraqi's to come in to the Security Council to take his seat at the table with the Kuwaiti over on the other edge of the open ring of the table to present their views. But he didn't, I think, create a lot of what I would call excited positive emotions mainly because of what they had done in Kuwait and their inability to defend it. Saddam's own crassness and his ability to make mistakes as he went along that helped too -just to go back to this other resolution because the other part was interesting too.

The other folks who had a problem on this resolution were the Chinese. The Chinese had had a 'principled' position, they wouldn't authorize the use of military force through the Security Council. So we had to address this issue. Ambassador Li Dao Yu told me that it was going to be very hard for them. I said, "Obviously the end result here is that you need to find a way to abstain; you don't want to veto a resolution of this importance, at this time, in this situation which is directly related to the enforcement of a sanctions resolution you just voted for. So in effect, you are on the line to join the rest of the crowd and be with us." He said, "I understand that," and he said, "I am in touch with Beijing." He said, "Let me talk to Beijing again." I said "Yes, let's work together to find a way for you to abstain." I said, "You know one of the things you need to do is to figure out what it is that you say in the explanation of your vote on this resolution." He said, "Well that makes a lot of sense." So we put our heads together and out of this came a proposal in which essentially he said the following, "I think I can sell this if I can go to Beijing and say the following. I will speak the last of all the people explaining the vote and I will say that Beijing does not consider this a use of force resolution. You will guarantee that on your side that nobody will come back and say anything different and this will allow us to abstain in this resolution, if we have this deal." I said, "Done, we can do that and we will work with everybody else in the Council to make sure nobody upsets this applecart." Of course, everybody in New York immediately understood what was going on and he was able through his role in China and his position in China and the trust they had in him to sell this. Of course this was a kind of camel's nose under the tent down the road much later with respect to the big use of force resolution on which they also abstained, but it was an interesting kind of effort there.

A lot of things we did were obviously public relations. We got to a point where it became clear from the reports we were getting from Kuwaitis and from reports that were coming out of Kuwait that the Iraqi's had become very abusive and very punitive in their occupation -- taking everything from military equipment and civil airplanes to archeological artifacts back to Iraq, making a lot of arrests and harsh interrogations, some murders assassinations and abuse of women. It was clear that Iraqi military force was not under total, strict control. So we decided that we needed another resolution. We would in effect take on the opportunity to present to the Council, and get the Kuwaiti's to sponsor this, a whole series of things, personal appearances, videos and others of people who had escaped, people who had endured Iraqi occupation to describe it in some detail and we did. We put on a whole three-hour presentation in a public

meeting of the Security Council, public meetings were all televised in those days, not just in New York but got a lot of national television because of the interest in this

*Q: Yes, I remember seeing that.*

PICKERING: This was very important because then it helped us to pass a resolution, which in fact, put Iraq on notice that it was in the zone of war crimes and carrying out activities in Kuwait, which were contrary to international law. They would be personally responsible for them.

So this build up went on and it moved along pretty well. We had another serious hiccup near the end of November. By the end of November the resolution on the use of force had begun to take shape in capitals. We had little to do with it but at that point but we knew it was coming. We had a very rough idea of what it would include and that Secretary Baker had done trips to meet almost all of the foreign ministers of the members of the Council including a lot of heads of states. President Bush had called a lot of them personally. Critical calls were Shevardnadze, who was then foreign minister of the Soviet Union, and Gorbachev to bring them on board. The British and the French, of course came on. They had some of their own considerations that had to be factored in. The resolution authorized states cooperating with the coalition to use 'all necessary means' to in effect achieve the objectives of the first resolution -- liberate Kuwait. It was interesting because while all that was going on we were given an opportunity within a few days of the presentation of that resolution to work with the other delegations in New York to make sure that we had the wording right and the technical stuff right. There were a few open questions. There was a date certain after which the resolution would become effective, there was in a sense a grace period in the resolution to permit Iraq to participate one way or another in getting out of Kuwait, whether through negotiation or otherwise. The resolution came and we had discussions in the P5. There were few if any changes, they had all been informed and they knew where they were. Actually Secretary Baker came up and met with the Cuban foreign minister, the Cubans, to try to talk him into being supportive of this he wasn't. He talked to the Yemeni's they were not.

*Q: How did we analyze where the Cubans fell? I mean far more responsive was the Soviets who were on board. I mean why were the Cubans off on this thing? Do you have any feel for that?*

PICKERING: Well I think the Cubans tended to take a contrarian view in the use of force because they were worried about precedents. They were worried about perhaps another the Bay of Pigs.

*Q: Yeah, we may have...*

PICKERING: So I think it was a very narrow Cuban preoccupation on this but that is what the Chinese were worried about, the precedent, even though they had a veto capability. But they didn't want to have the Council have a habit of doing this much lest have to veto one. I think those were the primary considerations.

We decided to have the meeting at the ministerial level to pass the use of force resolution. We would have the ministers in the chair, which was unusual, it happened maybe once, or twice

before what we did. The US was president of the Council. Secretary Baker came up and chaired the meeting -- the ministers all spoke. It was clear that Yemen was not going to support us but I think we had twelve, the Chinese abstained, and the rest did maybe one of the others Cuba voted against, but we had a comfortable majority for that resolution and it went through. At that meeting, Secretary Baker offered to have a meeting with Saddam Hussein and or the Iraqi's to discuss the whole situation so we opened up a potential negotiating path. Certainly U.S.-Iraq direct contacts and I think that was very helpful. The effective date for the implementation of the resolution was 15 January, some 45 days after passage to allow time for negotiations. The announcement on our willingness to meet Iraq was done after the vote, but it was done confident that we would get a pretty good vote and it was done confident that an approach like this would be helpful in bringing on the rest of the world community.

During this whole process from August to the end of November at the UN, we had avid and intense press interest in what was going on, near a feeding frenzy. There were several press stakeouts, one on the entrance into the Security Council area, coming in and going out. The press, of course, could cover live the formal meetings which were held in the open Security Council chamber and the stakeouts were used by the parties including the U.S. to talk through the press to both to the members of the UN but even more importantly to the general public about what was going on, where we were headed, what our objectives were and what our views were on about achieving those objectives. So there was a lot of opportunity to talk to the press. I used it as frequently as I could in a way with the first priority being that to assure that the membership in the UN was fully conversant with what was going on and was not going to get wobbly on me or move off the bandwagon. There was a growing push back on us and the actions we were taking in the council, It has come to a head around the use of force resolution and I did not want to see it undo all that we had put together.

*Q: What about in the Latin American context because this is far away, I mean this is way over their horizon. But how did they...?*

PICKERING: Yes and no I mean one of the things you have to remember in those days was that Brazil was the largest exporter of military equipment to Iraq after Russia, I think, and maybe even ahead of France in those days.

*Q: Really, good heavens.*

PICKERING: In the '80s and '90s.

*Q: I didn't realize that.*

PICKERING: Yes, they sold a lot of armored cars and some artillery and trucks and things of that sort. So they were not...they all were heavily dependent on petroleum and so for them this was a next-door trade issue. They were certainly not out of it or thought that this was remote in any way beyond where they were. So the use of the press there was a fundamental tool. My own view was that later on I think that there was certainly a concern -- and I got reflections on this -- concern in Washington that Pickering was too much in the press. But it was concern not that I wasn't being effective or certainly no one conveyed concern to me that I had articulated a view

that wasn't U.S. policy, but just concern that I was out there too much. This was all without any conversation or a full understanding either of what this meant both to me in being able to be successful in keeping the UN part of this effort mobilized. I think secondarily because the UN was a big center of attention in keeping the world moving with their part of it.

*Q: I think part of the thing I picked up from the corridors or maybe from the gossip columnists that you were making, particularly Margaret Tutwiler and her crew who were supportive of Jim Baker, I mean they were very fixed on the image. Jim Baker was doing his job but as often happens a coterie around him wants their principal to be number one. This was making them feel uncomfortable.*

PICKERING: I think that probably it was because that certainly it was conveyed to me first through the press when I was replaced, but that took place many, many months later. But I had been down fairly often to see both the president and the secretary and Baker had been up to see me. None of that was expressed. Occasionally, I would get a view from IO about why did I say a particular thing and I would say I said a particular thing because we needed that to go where they wanted me to go. and I thought it was an the authority that I had on the basis of existing policy. Nobody ever came back and said, "Well you made a horrible mistake and you've lead us into a terrible disaster."

I raise that in part because I think there was never an understanding on the Washington end among the close coterie around Secretary Baker, Margaret and John Bolton, that this was in my view essential to get my job done, and they never raised it with me. But I think that was part of it.

*Q: It was in the background.*

PICKERING: There was a bit of spite at the end. In any event that's the price you pay for trying to do your job, in my view it was absolutely the right thing to do -- it was the right way to proceed.

The next phase came...

*Q: Excuse me but while you were doing all of this we were amassing a major military force.*

PICKERING: We were continuing a buildup and that buildup continued until the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. The bulk of that buildup took place probably after September-in October, November, December.

*Q: Well was the thought in you and your colleagues in the UN's minds was you know we are not going to let that thing sit there during the summer particularly...*

PICKERING: Well no, the view already came over to us that the Americans can't fight in hot weather and so we have to finish this all before the summer of 1991 and therefore there is an imperative. I didn't necessarily accept that view as dispositive, but I accepted it as a clear indication of a timetable. I had no role in trying to reset the timetable or to change the approach. I think we all felt we had to live with it. We had some regret obviously that Saddam wasn't wise

enough to wake up in advance and understand what was going to hit him and accept sanctions and a withdrawal. On the other hand, I think that as time went on we had become pretty confident that he wasn't going to do that and the use of force was the direction in which we were headed.

*Q: How were we reading Saddam Hussein?*

PICKERING: But I think we read him as someone who was marching to his own drummer, difficult to predict, very obdurate and certainly totally confident in his own efforts. His own confidence had obviously increased remarkably by his ability rapidly to knock off Kuwait in 24-hours. I think this all added to his own misplaced sense of where he stood in the world firmament and I think this led him into one disaster after another.

We had another difficult thing that happened in the end of the first phase, slopped over into the second phase. There was very clearly the development during this period beginning fairly early on but much more intensively as time went on as where Saddam saw the Security Council going. He wanted to hook himself in to the Arab-Israeli situation and become the champion of the Arab cause. He wanted to convert the invasion of Kuwait into a new "jihad" which he would lead, the "new war" against Israel and therefore we were very, very careful to try to keep things separate. Sometime in November, I recall maybe early or mid-November before we got the use of force resolution and I was president of the Security Council in November, which means I was in the chair. As an aside here, Washington I think, had a misplaced assumption about the power, but they are relatively limited. But, they saw as a happy circumstance that I was there in November and then I was followed by the Brits, I think that was right. No the Brits were ahead of me. We hadn't gotten the use of force resolution we were keeping everything open to get it.

In the meantime we had a big dustup on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, such that Israeli's fired upon a crowd, I think seven or nine or may be people were killed. The crowd had been throwing rocks over the Western Wall on Jews who were praying at their holiest shrine, which is the Western wall abutment of the Temple Mount. So the Israeli police went up to stop it and firing had broken out. These people had been killed; there was seesawing civil commotion and riot. Of course, immediately the Arabs tried to bring this into the Security Council and we were at risk of losing the coalition. The question was under discussion for some time. The discussion seesawed back and forth. We had it in informal meetings of the Security Council. Over a period of time the Arabs generated increased pressure about let's go vote on a resolution. I didn't want to have a public meeting of the Security Council to ratify the disarray because it was clear that we couldn't get a resolution we could support, we would only get a resolution we would veto. Were we to veto a resolution, it would take a lot of the weight that we had put on the solidarity of the Council and the build-up to the use of force resolution away from that issue. So it was not only a distracting tactic, it was a very divisive enterprise, not necessarily of anyone's making by design, but certainly by happenstance. So one of the critical meetings where I was in the chair in the informal meetings of the Council and I knew this was coming, everybody told me it was building up, was that I had to make a personal decision as the leader of the Security Council, the president did, as to whether we would go out on the floor and vote on a resolution text on this Arab Israeli Temple Mount issue. That is whether I would schedule a public meeting on that subject and I said, "That for a whole series of reasons I am against scheduling a public meeting and that



remains my view.” I said, “In the end, of course, I have to be bound by what the members of the Council want to decide, threatening to put it to a vote in the informal meeting as to whether we would go out and do that or not. I knew I could count on some votes, but I didn’t know that I had enough. I just had to take that chance and I said, “You know, if we lose, we lose but I am going the whole way to block this because of the negative impact it will have on our joint work on Kuwait.” In the course of the ensuing debate my good friend, the then Soviet representative, Yuli Vorontsov, came forcefully into the debate and said, “Russia is not interested in a divisive issue at the present time and it will not support having a public meeting on this issue while the parties in the region attempt to work this out.” That was it and we put it off until after the use of force resolution, but it was entirely unexpected. I had no idea that I would get help in that area.

*Q: Then how did things...*

PICKERING: Then what happened was interesting because the next phase was characterized by a serious disinterest in the part of the U.S. and the others in doing anything in the Security Council. We had achieved the epitome; we had gotten all of these resolutions including the crowning 12th resolution 678 on the use of force all passed.

While we had suggested negotiations, which took place in Geneva between James Baker and Tariq Aziz’s his opposite number from Iraq, they got nowhere. They took place I think in late-December. There were then several other currents astir. One of these was that Javier Perez de Cuellar, the secretary general felt that he in his own role as secretary general of the United Nations could not escape an opportunity to at least do what he could with the Iraqis to see if he could get them to withdraw. Well this raised the potential of a negotiation and all the difficulties that that would portend.

Secondly, we had the creation in the Security Council, essentially of a gang of four. I think it was Colombia, Malaysia, Cuba and Yemen. Their next tactic was to push for negotiations with Iraq. In some measure, this was responsive to well-meaning people all around the world including some in the United States and Roger Fisher up at Harvard who was a guru on negotiations. An old friend of mine, Roger advised them. Actually the interesting thing was Roger was calling me for advice while he was advising them on where to go and how to move things ahead. I took the position that anybody could try to negotiate with Saddam if they wanted. I couldn’t block that and the U.S. couldn’t stop that, but that any state that wished to negotiate, especially, including members of the Security Council, would be totally bound by the resolutions of the Security Council. They could not negotiate outside of the four walls of those resolutions, and they provided for a removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait as rapidly as possible with nothing else to be paid for that and the return of the two islands in particular, which would have been disputed and were now occupied by Iraq -- Warbah and Bubiyan.

So that set up a whole lot of things that made a negotiation nearly impossible. The issue never really got there because Saddam at every stage rebuffed the offers. He never connected in any serious way with the gang of four effort or said he was not interested in it. The secretary general actually did either meet Tariq Aziz or might have actually gone to Baghdad, but anyway he made an effort. I made it a point to go by and see him and take a message and say the message is that you’re a creature of Security Council in this issue more than anybody else and so whatever you

negotiate has to be totally in accord with the resolutions that have been passed. You cannot negotiate those away or renegotiate those resolutions. Those negotiations never prospered and Saddam lost a chance to drive some serious wedges between members of the Council and the Secretary General and the Council had he played it more intelligently.

What we were worried about was that there would be a position along the following lines -- that Saddam would agree to take his forces out of Kuwait but in return he would get confirmed transfer of the two main islands south of the entrance to the Tigris and the Euphrates that had been in dispute for a long time, Warbah and Bubiyan -- these were in a sense almost tidal flats but big. They bordered the main shipping channel -- his shipping was using to get in and out of the oil ports at Umm Qasr near Basra that was transporting a lot of Iraqi oil. He just didn't like having to see Kuwaiti territory on the southern boundary of his main export channel.

Secondly, even more, we were concerned that the huge Rumaila oil field, the northern portion of which was in Iraq, and the southern contiguous portion was in Kuwait, would be taken as the Iraqi prize for getting out of Kuwait. So we were concerned about deals of that sort, as well as obviously leaving him scot-free of any responsibility for the aggression and damage. We saw plenty of propensity for people "thinking creatively" to go for deals like that. Those deals were directly contrary to the resolutions, but nevertheless it was not impossible that somebody would try. So we saw the build-up, if you like, of a kind of potential for this to do everything possible to avoid a conflict. To use a negotiating route in effect which would leave Kuwait bereft of some of its most important resources and territory as a result of the Iraqi invasion. Certainly a result that in the end would only have encouraged more bad behavior on the part of Iraq to say nothing of what it would have done to the recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait.

When this got started, I didn't see much response in Washington about what to do about it. I had a young man who had come from UNAUSA (United National Association of the U.S.A.), very bright, Peter Fromuth, working for me as a kind of policy planner. I said, "Peter our first new big task, yours and mine, is to sit down and figure out what the U.S. position must be with respect to a negotiation between Iraq and somebody over withdrawal from Kuwait." So we did and we quickly evolved at his suggestion -- why not borrow Henry Kissinger's model from first Sinai disengagement, on which I had worked. The model we developed was fairly simple; that the end result of a negotiation over Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait had to involve a few elements on our side. Those elements would be that Iraq would remove itself essentially from all the desert (low population) territory along the Saudi-Kuwait border back to the areas of population or 200 miles, whichever was less. So it meant that in effect we would create a UN zone in southern Iran that would be occupied by UN forces as a peace-keeping mission that would cover all of that desert area including the northern portion of the Rumaila oil fields and right up to the outskirts of Basra and to the major towns along the Euphrates as it went through that desert up to 200 miles inside Iraq. Beyond that we would create additional zones of disarmament, the first being that there would be no tanks, artillery or anti-aircraft weapons for another hundred kilometers or so. These were zones of limited armament. Each zone would be limited in equipment. The nearest to the outside would have the greatest limitations beginning with tanks and artillery, then anti-aircraft weapons and so on. We favored a no fly zone over all of Iraq including rotary wing aircraft. So it was a forward move effort rather than to say what is it we will give up from Kuwait. It was an step further to protect Kuwait and to say Iraq you accept now the responsibilities for this. This

was put together, we sent it to Washington, Washington said they liked it, and they thought it was the right way to proceed. I wanted a starting point. I didn't think we were going to end up here necessarily.

Q: There were a considerably number of prisoners on the part of the...

PICKERING: They should be returned. You know all of that stuff was folded in and some of this anticipated what came in resolution 687. But the most interesting thing was that at the end of this second phase, just as we were about to terminate the war, we resubmitted this whole proposal and said this should be our approach to war termination. Well we pushed it hard, Baker said he pushed it. It was killed by the military, I think principally General Schwarzkopf, in part because he didn't understand it and two he thought it was going to involve a big effort on the part of the United States military to have to impose this and or to man it.

In the meantime, I talked informally with the British and the French. They were all for it certainly at the UN, but I'm sure they discussed it in capitals and they thought in fact that the ground forces could come exclusively from outside the U.S., but that the U.S. would have to provide the air forces to patrol this. And, in fact, of course as you know, we provided both ground forces and air forces throughout that whole period of time. So the objection was that what we ended up having to do anyway we would have had to have done. The difficulty was that we lost the opportunity to be in direct touch with the Shia, who, as you know, went after Saddam right after they pulled out of Kuwait. And we lost the opportunity to limit Saddam with respect to the use and deployment of many of his military forces and to squeeze him into a smaller area -- a step that was complimented a few days after the end of the war by the French-inspired resolution protecting the Kurdish territories in the north. So in effect we would have pushed Iraq in terms of Saddam's continuing control out of the Kurdish areas and out of most of the desert areas, including anything that went over toward the Jordanian and Syrian borders. We would have control of that through the UN. My own feeling was that it was a huge missed opportunity, but one of the things that we do wonderfully is plan wars and execute them and one of the things we do traditionally terribly is to figure out on what basis to end them. This was, I think another remarkably example of that.

So why don't I then take us in to the third phase, if that's ok.

*Q: Sure, that would be fine.*

PICKERING: Then before we go we'll pick up some questions. The third phase had to do eventually with the one I've just set the stage by talking about and that was war termination.

War termination took place in a couple of phases. The immediate phase in which I frankly was shocked was that we would designate a general officer to meet the Iraqi's at an airfield, Safwan, in southern Iraq and negotiate the terms of the Iraqi removal from Kuwait with no U.S. government position and with no interagency consultations.

*Q: I've interviewed Chas. Freeman our ambassador to Saudi Arabia who said he had sent in some...you know what are we going to do afterwards. I mean...*

PICKERING: I had been doing the same thing.

*Q: I mean just to develop...first place was the expectation just before the war started that this was going to be over in a hurry or was there an awful lot of exaggeration of the Iraqi...*

PICKERING: No the expectation wasn't that it was going to be over in a hurry, the expectation was that it would take time. The expectation was that we shouldn't underestimate the 24 or 44 or whatever divisions the Iraqi's had in Kuwait. The truth is we did not estimate accurately the value of the bombing campaign, particularly with respect to the tactically deployed Iraqi forces and how effective it was and how demoralizing it was. The Iraqi's fought pretty well in that one foray they tried to make into Kuwait on the...

*Q: Appear from Saudi Arabia from...*

PICKERING: From Saudi Arabia. They came into Saudi Arabia and we pushed them back. So they appeared to have some tactical confidence not that they were the Wehrmacht on a blitzkrieg, but they were technically competent. There were a lot of stories. We built a large desert series of hospitals, a series of hospital complexes because we were wary of very high casualties and that played a role in our looking at this thing.

I had a very interesting vignette -- sometime in late October I came down to Washington Colin Powell was JCS Chairman, he had asked me to stop by and see him from time to time. I took the opportunity to do so. We sat alone in his office and talked a bit and I said, "You know I've been thinking, I'm not a military person but a few years ago I did an overland trip. One leg of that was from Kuwait all along the Iraqi border up to Jordan inside Saudi Arabia." I said, "It's a wide open area and we initially went off the main road into the desert to camp in one of these places just about forty kilometers past the tri-point of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia," and I said, "It looked wonderfully trafficable and very easy to pass." I said, "If I were you I would think about going up there and moving around the end of the Iraqi defense line." He looked at me and said, "You know, that's a consideration and we've looked at it but the logistics are too difficult." He wanted to get rid of that, he didn't want anybody to talk about it. In light of what happened, it was interesting, not that this was a uniquely inventive idea -- encirclement and outflanking are always real possibilities. But it was, I'm sure, very much on his mind and he was contending with the logistics of making that shift which we ended up doing beautifully.

*Q: Making peace is an obvious thing that sort of diplomats do, normally generals don't do that and it's a sort of thing that you put task forces to work and all. Were you getting any of this through your place or the departments?*

PICKERING: I talked to Bob Kimmitt about Safwan and said, "Well who's the State Department representative?" and they said, "We don't have one." So I said, "Why would you do that? We at least have people who speak Arabic, who know the situation, who have been around Iraq and you guys must have thought about it. We've sent you a lot of ideas, you must have a distillation of ideas about what you want to do and do you want to permit this all this to happen un-attended to from State?" Well, it was what was going to happen I guess. As their reward for

this remarkable lightening victory, they went to the table and, of course, out of that had come things like it's ok to fly your helicopters. Well I think General Schwarzkopf maybe meant it's OK to come in and out of these peace talks by helicopter but they said, "Oh terrific, we will fly our helicopters all over the country," and proceeded to do so and we did nothing. I think that aided them remarkably in defeating the Shia in the end when the Shia uprising took place. We were a little bit uncertain as to whether we would encourage it or discourage it. But they had the feeling that we were ready to go and support them.

They rejected this idea about these big UN zones which I thought would have made a lot of sense in moving ahead. About that time, in fact on the afternoon of the last day of ground war, I talked to my staff, and we came up with an idea -- that I called Bob Kimmitt about it. It was late in the afternoon of the day the war was over. It was clear the president had just announced the war was over and I called Bob. I said, "Bob, I know the military doing this as you and I've talked about it. We are going to need another channel." I said, "I worked with al-Anbari, the Iraqi ambassador here for a long time. I can tell you that I think he knows how to deliver messages at home and he'll deliver them well, he's a professional." I said, "I think I ought to go meet with al-Anbari right away and set up that channel." In 15 minutes he came back and he said do it. I called al-Anbari and he said, "Well, I've been waiting for months by the phone to hear from you." He said, "Come now." So I went up and we set up a channel. I said, "I will call you and come by to see you to deliver messages. Here's the message." I gave him the president's statement on the end of the war. "But I want you to stand by for more messages and I hope you'll be available on very short notice." and he said, "Anytime, I'm available, it's been awful" right in his residence, which I'm sure was bugged by his own security services.

It was remarkable in New York walking into a room with a large picture of Saddam glowering down, but we used that channel for three months or four months. I incorporated from time to time the British and the French in it. Sometimes we delivered tripartite messages. Sometimes we delivered the toughest messages I've ever delivered diplomatically to anybody and we usually got a response back within 48-hours that Iraq will comply -- so it was a very effective channel. In fact, in conveying to Saddam what it was that we expected him to do, I don't think we made as much use of it for as long as we could have, but we made quite exemplary use of it during that period of time.

*Q: When sort of the supposition is on your part and others who are dealing with this that Saddam would not survive once this thunderbolt hit him?*

PICKERING: This was a view, it was a view that became a cant, it was a view that I somewhat distrusted, but I didn't know the answer except to err on the side of caution on that one. It was not a view that I felt confident that I could express or support in a kind of enthusiastic way but I could always express it and say, "Well there is always a chance that he won't survive because he's committed all of these sins in the eyes of the Iraqi people." But we had this Iraqi monolithic security establishment which, if anything, got worse as we later looked at it. It was patterned certainly on what Stalin did, it was the model, but it was even more ruthless and was even more draconian. It involved everything including inducements to kind of immediate assassination in a public forum of individuals. We were talking the other night at a group about how Saddam called the cabinet together in a large room, immediately announced the replacement of the cabinet by a

new cabinet list and then made every one of the new cabinet members go out and shoot his predecessor right there in the ante room to the assembly hall.

*Q: It was televised, at least the...*

PICKERING: It was televised.

Q: Yeah, I've seen clips of this thing.

PICKERING: Yeah and so the notion of an early collapse was not so easy to envisage. The other issue that was around and it is a military issue and it's one that I looked at later but I didn't have much feel for it during the time was that a large number of revolutionary guard troops ended up on the south side of the Euphrates -- I guess, under the guns of the most advanced American elements. The war ended in a way and under circumstances where very significant numbers of their armored vehicles could be withdrawn and brought up over bridges and taken back to Baghdad rather than in fact made to stay in place and be surrendered to American forces. This allowed the reconstitution of the revolutionary guards in a way that made them more robust than they would have been had they in fact all been surrendered. Nobody thought about that, I think, very much and thought about where it was to go. They played a role in opposing the Shia

I also think that it was the public pressure and the...

*Q: The way we are going to do it and disregarding other advice. Just this is more... almost a happenstance.*

PICKERING: Well I think that in the first Gulf War, we underestimated the rapidity of victory and the completeness of it and we did little to prepare for that circumstances or indeed the circumstances that would result from a long military effort to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait. We didn't do war termination very well.

In the second Iraq war we drew on that lesson and on all of the technology and capability we had added to our military forces. I think we had a realistic estimate of what it would require but at the same point we entirely overestimated what would happen. Even worse was that in the second Gulf War we didn't listen to all the other advice which was being offered well in advance of the war, about the things that had to be looked at and taken care of both during combat but more importantly in the aftermath of combat. We were also handicapped by the fact that while in the first Gulf War we paid an enormous amount of attention to the international community in lining them up and indeed, as you know, it was the twelve resolutions of the Security Council that became the basis for Congressional approval of our actual involvement in fighting. We went the other way around, we went ahead and involved our Congress before we got the Security Council and never got the Security Council to go with us. So, in effect in a war termination scenario which undoubtedly, in my view, we need the whole international community to be partners with us on an Iraq and we haven't gotten it. We set the predicate for that by not using the Security Council and certainly not using our own tremendous diplomatic capabilities to bringing in to being a much more effective, a much more legitimate coalition that could do all of that after the fighting. So, there is a kind of UN principle in my mind -- how you go into one of these things

with the international community determines on how you come out with them. If you don't go in with them, you don't come out with them.

*Q: Well were you feeling, I've heard that one reason why we didn't, well there is a lot of debate whether we should have taken another 24-hours, taken the, surrounded the...*

PICKERING: Revolutionary guard.

*Q: Revolutionary guard and all of that. But, one of the reasons given is, well the UN would not have gone along with it. How...*

PICKERING: No, I think we could have gotten another 24-hours or even 36-hours out of that war. I didn't feel that we were being overwhelmingly pushed at the UN to end it and I think certainly we could have held off a meeting particularly if we said that the war will be over in 36-hours kind of thing that we are just mopping up.

So I didn't feel that. I was quite surprised that we got out so early in part because I thought the job was still partly half done. I was totally convinced in those days that going to Baghdad was not a good idea. Going to Baghdad was not a good idea because in fact we had not set the political predicate for it in the resolutions. Partly, I thought it was a bad idea because I didn't know what kind of fighting we would get in to in the heart of Baghdad. I was not interested in seeing huge casualties from the U.S. side as a result of city fighting or to the same degree a huge fight and casualties on the Iraqi side in a kind of indiscriminate destruction that often takes place in city fighting. I don't think we were prepared to do that, had no mandate and were not called upon to do so.

There was this argument about not fighting in summer and undoubtedly we would have been pulled into the summer fighting one-hundred percent. I think the real question was could we have carried our allies, probably not too many of them, if that was the case. So all of those fitted together as a piece and I think the president was deeply committed not to go on to Baghdad. That was very much his view from the beginning and I think he's made that clear President George W. Bush. So that was not on, but the question was in winding up the phase we were engaged in did we do the best of all possible jobs and I certainly have severe doubts.

I think things began to come apart as we moved out of the combat phase and into essentially the diplomatic phase. Now, I have to say that in New York the two pieces I've just talked about were preliminaries. The big piece was the notion of a resolution that we would put in place which would define the time and circumstances of Iraqi actions, from the international community, and impose those on Saddam with respect to his future. So that while we didn't go to Baghdad, instead we went to New York and the Security Council. There we attempted to put into place with our friends and allies and the other members of the Security Council a construct that could deal with the myriad problems that came out of the war and the things that we wanted to have done. This became and still is in many ways a groundbreaking resolution 687. It had a lot of different pieces and parts but it was a resolution that people had begun to think about in Washington and London and Paris. It was a resolution that brought together arms control considerations, typical UN peace-keeping, the notion of finance and who pays and

compensation, the return of prisoners and captured material, all of those kinds of things. Those formed the four corners of that resolution. We worked extensively on the language in New York because we had in effect the group that was prepared to do that. We got a lot of language from Washington but in the end it was a resolution we put together. It came in three parts, which was unusual for a UN resolution. Most of it was under chapter VII, so it was mandatory and we set forth a whole set of obligations and requirements.

One of the most interesting, of course, was under what circumstances would the sanctions come off. The sanctions were going to come off when Saddam had complied. My view in working out that resolution was that we actually had agreed to provide a time and circumstances, not a date certain, but a condition certain, for the removal of those sanctions. Over the years since, we have evolved a different view of that and that view was in effect, well, that's highly unlikely if Saddam is still there we will take off the sanctions. There was no way that Saddam could by staying in power meet the conditions of the removal of the sanctions under resolution 687. That was a bone of contention later on with our friends and allies. I had the pleasure of giving a speech explaining that resolution which articulated both the terms. And Madeleine Albright later said, "You know I was confused about this so I went back and read your speech Tom," and she said, "I'm still confused." I said, "You should have been because, in fact, I had to keep faith with the people I negotiated with by putting one thesis in and I was instructed by the State Department to put the other one in. so rather than worry about the calamity of two different points of view, I just found a way to get them into different pieces of the speech."

*Q: As this...were you getting reactions from your colleagues and different delegates about how we were coming up with a piece, you know the meeting in the tent?*

PICKERING: Sure, there was huge interest and it took quite a bit of time between us, the British and the French and then we went into a lot of discussions with the Russians and the Chinese to bring them along with the various concepts, explain what was going on to take into account their views. One of their critical views was that we had to be prepared to list sanctions on the basis of full compliance by Saddam. We agreed to that in New York. Washington later changed it's mind about whether that was a good thing, but it was done with Washington's full knowledge and it was done as an absolutely necessary basis to get the resolution.

*Q: Speaking of not planning on the piece I'm a civil war buff and when you think of Ulysses Grant and William Sherman both sitting down ending the war more or less ad hoc, I think Grant had a better idea. He had just met with Lincoln but Sherman was on his own and got thoroughly attacked by elements within Congress afterwards.*

PICKERING: Absolutely, but in a sense this resolution was fascinating because the primary area where it broke ground was to say that we are concerned about weapons of mass destruction. Admittedly, we have an international non-proliferation issue but here we have a state that's made a huge mistake and ended up getting egg all over its face and defeated militarily. Can we now impose on that state a whole series of rigorous disarmament requirements in the weapons of mass destruction area including a very intrusive inspection mechanism. And we all said yes, we think that this not only is deserved but it's necessary. There was a serious concern about proliferation and how he would handle a nuclear weapon if he got one, to say nothing of his vast



experience with chemicals and a deep concern about biological weapons and what he would do with bugs.

So, this part I think took a lot of work, but it was put together very carefully and we had to sit down and we created a new piece of the United Nations. We brought the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) in although I can tell you that because the IAEA inspection up until about then was regulated by subsidiary agreements to the non-proliferation treaty and therefore required a continuing deference to state sovereignty and a state's ability to say yes to inspections. It was uncertain in the United States as to whether we could wean the IAEA away from that culture. We tried with a set of regulations and rules in the resolution that said in fact that Saddam didn't have a choice in this regard that he had to accept these inspections. While it did not say what the punishment would be for non-compliance, one area was self-evident that sanctions would continue. That inspection mechanism became UNSCOM and it functioned effectively for a number of years until perm 5 solidarity broke down over a number of questions including resuming trade with Iraq

Then we had to discuss OK what are we going to do about the humanitarian tragedy that we are seeing in Iraq among the Iraqi's and how do we deal with that. We said there has to be in this resolution a statement that, of course, food and medicine can continue to flow to Iraq. Not only that, we are prepared to work out with Saddam a mechanism to use the revenue from his oil exports and to permit those oil exports, they were not prohibited under the sanctions, for the purpose of the feeding and taking care of the health of his own people. So we put that in without the mechanism which was later negotiated and that took time. It took him five years to come around to that.

At the same time, we said we would put in a UN peace-keeping force but we had a kind of wimpy force a mile deep into Kuwait on the border and almost nothing in Iraq or maybe a mile into Iraq, but nothing much -- contrary to this much more extensive UN program we in New York wanted. We fought over that and fought over that from New York but eventually lost because Washington and the defense department didn't want to take care of that or have the obligation to do anything like it. They were very short sighted but that was that!

We set up a claims compensation commission of the UN which in effect got a significant share of the oil export money once it started to flow. It went into an escrow account and set itself up as a juridical body to decide the claims that people had against Iraq for the damage done to them during the war, against including Kuwaitis who had an early call on the money, as well as people around the world who had suffered damages. I forget whether we put a priority on the claim for civilian damages, I don't remember yet whether we excluded or not governmental damages. We were not going to get the Iraqi's to pay for the whole cost of the war in the U.S. because we had already been around with a cup in hand and gotten the Saudi's and the Japanese and other people to do that. But, this was a hugely new effort, totally unforeseen in the United Nations, embarked upon by the UN and requiring the setting up of another organization in the system to function and to carry this out including what rules it should apply and how it should work and that kind of thing. They handled billions of dollars in the end. We set rules, not to the degree of fine detail but on the basis of general principles which we had to put together in this resolution as we went

ahead. Then, of course, it went through all of the other questions -all the materials stolen from Kuwait, the return of prisoners, that kind of thing was all part of this resolution.

It was in many ways one of the most complex, one of the largest groundbreaking resolutions in the entire UN history. If people are looking for precedents of how the international community can come together and act with respect to a state that violates the rules and can do so on a coalition basis and work hard to get them back on track this is not a terrible precedent. Admittedly, there were huge problems with oil for food. In my view that was true not because it wasn't well prepared, but in part because at the time that it was negotiated Saddam had more leverage among the parties and in the Security Council in 1995 than he had back in '91 when the concept was first put in place.

Secondly, that it was impossible to substitute UN officials for Iraqi officials in the distribution of the food and in the oversight of the medicines. It was just too big a burden for the international community to take on especially since they did not control the territory. So in effect in the end he was in the cat bird seat with respect to this. I think that we and the rest of the world were so traumatized by the reaction of many people with humanitarian preoccupations which he played on, that this wasn't working well, that we refused to intervene especially when we knew that Saddam was gaining kickbacks from the money from oil contracts he was awarding because in the end he awarded the contracts for the food and medicine and for the oil sales to the people he most wanted to influence. So there was an uncannily large amount of this that went to France and to Russia. As a result in effect he bought influence and used kickbacks from this program in a way that took advantage of it and to a great extent. I'm not blaming the humanitarian people for saying this program wasn't working. Of course it wasn't working, not because the UN was at fault but because Saddam, himself, refused to distribute the food medicine fairly. He kept it in warehouses for his close friends from Tikrit and from other places in Iraq to build up his own domestic position. The poor, the disadvantaged were badly dealt with and so it was in a sense a failure as a program done with the very best of intentions of the international community.

In the end I don't think it argues that you shouldn't do such a program, but it argues that you have to nail it down and do a lot more to control it, and maybe use the international community a lot more. But Saddam was a particularly difficult character because in the end he tended to thwart UNSCOM (United National Special Commission) and keep them out of places. Early on UNSCOM would come to me and I would say my instructions are to tell you that you have the full support of the United States and I am ready to go to the Security Council and we are ready in fact to fly the airplanes and roll the tanks and make all the right noises and gestures and efforts to make sure that this worked. Rolf Ekéus of Sweden who was running it came to me several times and said without your support, your ability to do this, we would have been dead. We would not have done anything but we were able to do that and, of course, we used the Al-Anbari channel on a lot of these occasions to send these messages that helped to reinforce Iraqi behavior at least temporarily.

*Q: Well did you find that the UN-Iraqi channel I mean wasn't this a dangerous place for him?*

PICKERING: For who?

*Q: For Al-Anbari?*

PICKERING: Al-Anbari, no I mean he was sitting in New York as ambassador. He told his people I think what he heard from us he said, "Well you know these are not my messages." So, like any good ambassador...

The other interesting thing was how the UNSCOM got going with the Iraqi...

*Q: UNSCOM is?*

PICKERING: UNSCOM, later UNMOVIC, the United Nations inspection mechanism for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that was headed by a Swede Rolf Ekéus. Bob Gallucci became his first deputy for a couple of years and it had an interventional inspectorate and many of them did a terrifically good job. We provided them with support and advice and other countries did and they developed a mechanism to do this. They developed a mechanism in which they would have limited distribution access to very sensitive information about what was going on in Iraq. We were able to give it to them and they used that among other things to try to find Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Other countries did as well. Sometimes that information was bad and they got zero; other times it was very good. Sometimes they would hit an Iraqi place where they would get blocked as they watched Iraqi's try to go out through the back door. They got smart enough to go around the other side so at least they could see it coming, but they were not armed. They were not a military force. They were there for the purpose of inspecting only relevant Iraqi establishments. They discovered a huge amount. They destroyed a great deal and they provided what was a remarkable example of an imposed disarmament regime on a bad acting country in a way that achieved very important objectives. In the end as we know, unbeknownst to all of us, certainly to me at the time of my departure from the Clinton administration at the end of the year 2000, they for one reason or another were successful enough and we were thus able to convince Saddam that he should get rid of this stuff. And he actually did get rid of his nuclear program and I believe part of his chemical and biological programs, if not all as we found out in 2003 and 2004 when we occupied Iraq and had a chance to look for it all.

*Q: Did Iran play any role?*

PICKERING: I'm sorry Iraq did I say Iran?

*Q: You said Iraq but I was wondering we haven't mentioned Iran.*

PICKERING: Yes, Iran played an interesting role. In a sense the war had been going on and so there was still a lot of deployment of Iraqi forces and Iranian forces along the border. As you know, before the bombing got going intensively, the Iraqis flew a significant number of their air force planes to Iran for refuge and, of course, the Iranians appropriated them and are now a part of the Iranian air force. Iraq never got those back.

We were concerned that in the fighting and in the bombing, we did not bomb Iran, I think we made it clear to the Iranians we had no intention of doing that. But some stuff got loose and

along the border, particularly around Basra. I don't think we caused any huge amount of damage but there was a certain amount. We had to be careful with the Iranians not to get them engaged in this in one way or another.

*Q: Could you talk to the Iranian ambassador?*

PICKERING: No, absolutely not. They were in the UN but were in the phase of we don't talk to the Americans. I didn't have instructions to talk to them.

*Q: Was this awkward? I mean...*

PICKERING: No.

*Q: You talked to somebody who can talk to somebody?*

PICKERING: Yes, I mean I had the same problem with the PLO and to some extent with Cuba. I didn't talk to the PLO but everybody else did and so they would come to me and say this is what the PLO is saying and I would say, "Well this is what I say". But I mean you know...so you did it through intermediaries, if you had too. With the PLO on a rare social occasion I talked to Nasser al Qidwa, their representative as an observer at the UN -- nothing serious or substantive and after we were in touch with them. There were relatively few occasions when I think in my time we had real interest with Iran and those occasions had to do with getting hostages out of Lebanon. There we worked with Gianni Picco (Giandomenico Picco), and Italian working in the Office of the Secretary General and who had long experience in contacts with Iran and Iranians and was a superb negotiator and diplomat. Gianni, who was the secretary general's special assistant and Brant Scowcroft came up a couple of times to work with Perez de Cuellar on that issue. I delivered messages to them to try to do what we could to move along getting American and other hostages out of Lebanon.

*Q: I was wondering. Were you seeing a change...was Libya the fact that all of a sudden this force developed in Saudi Arabia to attack Iraq, did you feel that this was serving as an object lesson to Libya, which had made noises?*

PICKERING: Well, we don't know because in effect, as you know, later in the spring of '92 we then used the Security Council to go after Libya and passed the first resolutions on sanctions on Libya for their role in Pan Am 103 and the UTA (French) aircraft. So we took the experience and to some extent in the aftermath of what we did to deal with Iraq, but we began to look at how a more robust Security Council and a more robust role of the Security Council could be employed to serve and support our interests on a worldwide basis. To some extent we were led into places like Somalia, Bosnia and then breaking up Yugoslavia in that period. We had a much more successful effort at passing sanctions against Libya which then much later to the creation of a special court and the Libyan acquiescence in trying the two intelligence agents responsible according to our evidence for planting the bomb on PanAm 103. Now what we have seen at least extensively is the Libyan's wanting to join the established circle of nations and give up their experiments in nuclear and other things.

*Q: This is probably a very good place to stop Tom but we've talked pretty much...is there anything more that you will want to say about the Kuwait development? You left, when did you leave?*

PICKERING: May of '92.

*Q: You might talk a bit more about how you felt about your relations with the State Department, IO (International Organizations)...*

PICKERING: Sure, happily will.

*Q: And Jim Baker, this change of scene. We've already mentioned some bits about talking to the press but...*

PICKERING: No, I will. Let's put that in...sure.

*Q: Also I will ask about a day in the UN sometime and talking about how your team worked in the UN when you are not under a major issue but just general things and then about Security Council permanent representation by Germany and Japan.*

PICKERING: Sure, India and the Brazil largely.

*Q: What about this and then finally your impression of Bush I, George, his diplomatic effectiveness, not just him but his team which in my interviewing comes across as probably one of the best that we've had. I mean they dealt with very serious matters...*

PICKERING: Yes, Baker and Brent Scowcroft to be sure.

*Q: And did it well with well.*

PICKERING: So we've got a bit of a menu to work on.

*Q: Today is the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2006. Tom.*

PICKERING: So why don't we pick up just remind me on your checklist there since I guess you've written them down what shall we start with? Kuwait?

*Q: Yeah, Kuwait.*

PICKERING: What in particular do you think there? Do you mean the aftermath of the Kuwait issue?

*Q: I think we've talked about...*

PICKERING: We've talked extensively about it.

*Q: That so I don't think so I was really talking about well some of the almost nuts and bolts. How did...to talk about a typical day at the UN and then a bit about your team when you were not dealing with a crisis?*

PICKERING: OK, well let me turn to that because I think we have probably have covered parts of Kuwait -- the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the crisis and the play out from the point of view of the time that I was at the UN pretty thoroughly at least I cast my mind back. But I think all of that was pretty well covered.

I should mention that in the period between the passage of resolution 687, the war termination resolution in April 1991, and my departure in May of 1992, we spent a good bit of time doing what we could to see UNSCOM well set up and in dealing with questions of Iraqi resistance to and game playing in regard to their inspections. I did what I could within my instructions which were robust to make sure the Iraqis knew we were prepared again to use force if they did not comply with the resolution and in particular to permit UNSCOM to do its inspections. We used the al Anbari channel to send messages on that subject and spoke in the Security Council about it. It was soon enough after the conflict that Saddam was usually quick to comply. We also made it clear that there would be no prospect of seeing the sanctions taken off unless he complied fully as well.

It is hard to describe a typical day because things varied so much. The one thing I need to distinguish between what's happening at various times. There is a particularly intensive period of UN activity that begins in mid-September with the annual meeting of the General Assembly. It is kicked off by two weeks of visits of heads of state who give speeches in the General Assembly at the opening in the "so called general debate of the General Assembly". The U.S. by tradition speaks second on the first day; Brazil by tradition speaks first. Delegations can horse trade dates and times to accommodate the schedules of their heads of state.

That's a very intensive time and that is different from everything else because the ambassador and much of the team his pretty much occupied with a two or three day visit of the president and a longer one by the secretary of state. Some secretaries have chosen to stay for a week or two. Henry Kissinger in his first time there, I went with him as executive secretary just preceding the Yom Kippur War in 1973, spent a week or ten days there. He was new in the job and tried to see each of the foreign ministers who came and most of the heads of state. It was his way; he had come in at the end of August 1973, of introducing himself as secretary of state. It was an enormously valuable time for him. Others have had slower schedules and lighter work. Most found it valuable because it saved traveling thousands of miles to see other ministers and leaders who would all come to New York.

The regional bureau assistant secretaries and sometimes others would come up; most of the assistant secretaries would come particularly if the president or the secretary had senior level meetings with clients of theirs. The staff of the mission is beefed up with Foreign Service officer specialists in the geographic regions to help handle the influx. That is when the schedule is dictated pretty much by events that go on in the UN and that's not typical. If there is an overlapping, as there was in 1990 and '91 on Iraq and Kuwait, intensive set of Security Council

discussions, then things even more frenetic and difficult. Your time is sucked into those meetings and those sets of arrangements and all the other things you are trying to manage.

In a typical day outside of that set of competing activities, that is if the General Assembly is not in session, then you may well have as we did a morning staff meeting fairly early at which you spend 15 to 20 minutes with the team sometimes with the whole team but with your senior folks seated as I did at the head table. You would go over what they expect to address during the day, an update on what is going on across the street at the UN, a discussion of tactics and strategy that we ought to pursue and a sense of general direction as to where things should be going for the future.

The rest of the day may well then be consumed with contacts that carry out those kinds of activities. For the head of mission that might involve a whole series of meetings with other permreps in the United Nations. Occasional meetings outside the ambit of the United Nations with New York City folks to deal with some federal issues there, with some other federal employees might be on the agenda. We stayed in close touch with the FBI in New York and with other federal agencies and people who might come up for visits, visiting members of Congress, some of them are on your delegation each year in the General Assembly. At other times you would be dealing with some of the public members of your delegation, appointed by the president for the term of the General Assembly, but intensively there during the September to December timeframe where they pick up some of the duties of delegates of the General Assembly. They represent us and we thus also have issues discuss key issues with them. You might spend some time over at the secretariat building with the secretary general, or with some of the under secretaries general, getting their take on what's going on and passing on to them your take -- what it is that the U.S. would like to see done and where they would like to see the process on particular questions go.

I spent a fair amount of time with my British colleagues, particularly when we had intensive sessions with the Security Council. I also in those days spent time with the French who played on the P-3 team in those days and were quite helpful and cooperative. We had fairly frequent meetings during intensive periods of the Security Council meetings not just on Kuwait, but on other issues with the five permanent members of the Security Council. We had a rotating chairmanship monthly of the P-5 that could assemble the group at one or the others missions, usually whoever was chairman hosted the meetings. They were called on the request of one or a number of the members of that group.

Generally speaking, as the permanent representative, I did a fair amount of travel in low seasons, particularly leading up to the fall General Assembly meetings. There would often be trips to the capitals of countries involved in the Security Council particularly to the ten elected rotating members who were important obviously to stay in touch with. It was helpful to get a view from their capital as well as to get a sense from the perspective of the capitals as to how they saw things and what sort of issues they were involved in. Just getting acquainted with the 5 new players every year, was useful year. So you had a changing cast of characters to deal with. Some of my daily work would be consumed in a trip, maybe of a week or two, planned for a low season to take care of that kind of business.

I did not often go to Washington although in the early days President Bush, particularly as the Kuwait crisis evolved, he invited me down for NSC (National Security Council) meetings or for cabinet meetings. As I noted, I was not a member of the cabinet but President Bush and the cabinet staff would ask me to come down when they thought there were UN issues of interest and there were questions to be discussed from the UN side. My sense was that Secretary Baker found that uncomfortable, that it was not what he wanted to have -- someone there who was certainly subject to his authority and his instructions being asked to answer questions. But that was what the president wanted. Over a period of time the number of attendances diminished. It was not something that I felt was an end all and be all or my measure of a success or failure. Indeed, my feeling has been over a period of time that unless there are peculiarly important reasons why the UN ambassador should be a member of the cabinet it does not seem to be very useful to the New York Ambassador or the cabinet. A lot of it was frankly a loss in efficiency which is a diplomatic way of saying a waste of time in terms of what you were doing and where you were going. My feeling was that the fundamental focus of the job was to defend and protect U.S. interests and to do that in New York. To do that you had to be working with the New York crowd. You had to understand votes and you had to work the New York crowd hard to make sure in fact that as each issue came along you got the votes. If they understood that President and the Secretary were behind you and supportive and could be contacted, that was sufficient to assure that they would consider you effective.

Now the important thing to emphasize is that the New York operation is a mission operation. I've described with you essentially the things that I was doing, but they included in house meetings with staff members. I was particularly lucky in a sense that I had first Alex Watson who was my principal sidekick and who I had persuaded to come up from being ambassador in Peru to take on this job and who really in effect was my alter ego on all of the major substantive questions. I had Jonathan Moore who had worked over the years as a political appointee for people like Elliott Richardson who dealt with economic and social questions. I had first Jim Wilkinson and then George Moose who did a lot of my internal activity in the mission, became sort a chief for mission administration and management but also picked up related issues in the UN context -- UN budgeting, UN management kinds of questions. I had Shirin Taher Kheli who came up from Washington from the NSC staff who then picked up a variety of questions on the social side, human rights, women's activities, UN fund for population activities, some of the development questions that she and Jonathan Moore divided up so that in fact we had a fair distribution of responsibilities.

Below them we had standard sections in the mission and I was extremely lucky I had an old friend and colleague Bob Gray who ran the political section. Bob was principally an arms controller but he had a great deal of good political sense and a strong feel for politics as any Boston Irishman would. I had people like Cameron Hume and Jim Cunningham who later became deputy representative in New York. They had long service in New York working in the political section. We had people like Ed Marks who worked on economics and so in effect we were pretty well provided for. This was particularly given the difficulty of getting good people to come to New York if they didn't have a home base in New York because of the expensive housing and because of the varying relationships that existed in terms of limitations on housing support.



We had a particularly difficult problem in the management side in a sense that the leader of management when I got there was a lady by the name of Linda Shenwick. She proved to be both a burden and a cross to bear not only for me but for my successor and his successor, for Madeline Albright who finally succeeded in having her moved. I attempted to. She was a civil servant, nothing wrong with that, came out of FBO but had a peculiarly difficult management style and spent a good bit of her time in a sense turning in individuals for doing things that she had already approved but which tended to be retributive. This was a way, I think, of gaining influence on the situation. She had training and experience as a lawyer and was quite litigious and so was very difficult to deal with.

*Q: She had some support in Congress too.*

PICKERING: She did and she worked hard to develop that and it was quite unusual. I had spent a lot of time with Ed Perkins, who was my successor, who was then director general of the Foreign Service and head of personnel at State, seeking to get her moved. Ed overall was reluctant to do so and then he inherited her but for a relatively short period of time. So that was difficult.

*Q: You were kind of a landlord among other things.*

PICKERING: A bit maybe, we didn't provide space to other missions, but we had to provide facilitation of services and deal with questions and issues that came up that related both to their privileges and immunities, but also their need to construct a daily life in a diplomatic way in New York and the special section to deal with the diplomatic corps in New York handled that.

The mission was housed in the building now demolished and replaced by a much larger one at the corner of First Avenue and 45<sup>th</sup> right across the street from the main entrance to the General Assembly building and to the UN complex as a whole. So we were just a walk across First Avenue to get into the UN and we had a 12-floor building built I suspect, in the late '40s or early '50s that's now being replaced by a new building, which is much needed.

The UN ambassador lived on the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Waldorf Astoria and still does. It was the traditional residence since the very early days when our mission was originally on Park Avenue. It was an extremely useful location both from the point of view of centrality and for its size. While it was not an embassy residence in a traditional sense with space and gardens and things of that sort, it allowed you to entertain if you were squeezing, up to 150 or 200 for a reception. And with round tables and clearing out the living room I suppose you could accommodate 60-80 people in a served meal, if that is what you wanted to do. For my wife and me, it was more than adequate. People with larger families I think felt a little bit pressed. The kitchen facilities were tiny and we had enormously valuable and capable chef who managed to produce all kinds of meals for all kinds of people out of something that wouldn't have fit in a Pullman car, at least very well. The Waldorf allowed us to co-opt some of the hallway when we did that outside the residence spaces so that in fact we could manage the flow but the staff did so very well.

While the price tag was expensive it was not nearly what others paid in the Waldorf. We had a very special rate because the Waldorf wanted the mission there and over the years we constantly

were asked to look for new places and the going rate then for new places in the early '90s, for anything that would have been similar would have been in the neighborhood of ten to fifteen million dollars for a purchase or a very long lease on a residence. The annual lease at the Waldorf was a great deal less than that so it made reasonable sense to stay even though it had through the name Waldorf Astoria, a kind of air of lavishness which attracted Congressional attention from time to time.

We served as host for visiting federal officials when we wanted to. We were not required to but we often did and then sometimes, of course, the president and the secretary liked to stay at the Waldorf when they came up for their two days or their week at the General Assembly. That made it easy and handy to be accessible to them. We brought particularly President Bush back occasionally to visit his old living quarters to join us in a meal or a reception. It was handy and easy to make that happen.

I think those are kind of the nuts and bolts and other pieces of activity. It was a peculiar arrangement because we had a diplomatic mission inside the United States and some of the rules and activities we had to follow related more to domestic activities. We had a restricted ability to use some of the legislative authorities available to the Foreign Service and on the contrary, some of the rules of the Foreign Service that were otherwise restricted were open for us because we had no other alternative source of funding for particular kinds of activities.

*Q: This is Tape 14, Side 1 with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: That may sound particularly obscure as I explained it, but it meant that, in fact, you had to become an expert on what it was that related to your activities in New York in order to know and understand that while certain authorities that ambassadors had the right to use overseas were no long available and certain authorities which were limited in their use overseas were more widely available. You had to understand that and be able to kind of take care of it and not to step on peoples toes or otherwise.

Personnel management was difficult in New York. Large numbers of the staff were permanent civil servants and had been with the mission for a long time and so unlike an embassy where all the American staff rotated frequently, whether civil servants or foreign service, these people tended to stay and, of course, developed a view that ambassadors come and go and we stay on forever -- it was a little bit like Foreign Service nationals. To some extent they were enormously useful. We had a small legal team -- I may have mentioned this before that Robert Rosenstock had been there for a number of years he was absolutely invaluable. He knew and understood UN issues and how they operated and if I ever had a question about the operation of the Security Council or the parliamentary rules or precisely how a particular procedure worked, Bob always had the answer and even better there with sage advice.

The ambassadors became the president of the Security Council on a rotating, alphabetical basis in the English alphabet and so during a term of three and a half years with 15 members you could be president of the Security Council, which lasted a month, for two, three or four times depending upon how the alphabets lined up at the beginning of the year with five people going off and five people coming on. It tended to make things interesting and when I was there the

Yemeni, who was with me, was president three times in one year. Once because the Cubans recused themselves from the presidency, which is very unusual, because they were involved with the dispute with the United States over an issue in the region. Another time they were president because in the alphabetical rotation he represented Democratic Yemen. A third and final time, because both Yemen's united and he became the permanent representative of the new Yemen. So he got it both as D and as Y in the same year, which I think, was kind of a record. But it was interesting because there is a whole handbook in the U.S. mission about how and in what way the Security Council presidency operates -- and it is operated on a pretty fair basis.

You need to be careful and cautious, to intrude national interests in to the procedural relationships that guide you as president of the Security Council. You can certainly protect and defend them if you do so carefully and not confrontationally. And you can certainly make some decisions on the basis of national interest, but you want to be sure you will be backed up because in the end you can be overridden by a formal vote of the Security Council in any decision you make. While the veto doesn't normally apply to procedural issues the question as to whether an issue is procedural or not is subject to a veto. So in effect you are operating in a difficult atmosphere if you tend to alienate members of the Security Council over procedural questions and can't bring them along and you have a difficult issue to handle.

I was president in November of 1990 when we did the use of force resolution. Washington sort of timed that resolution for our presidency and considered it fortuitous. While I tried not to mislead Washington, I think they over estimated the degree to which the presidency of the Security Council provided us a significant advantage. It never came to a test on the use of force question directly, except for the Israeli problem on the Temple Mount.

Maybe we should move on then to relations with Washington.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: And how that works. Obviously unless the president decides otherwise and no recent president that I know has decided otherwise, the normal channel for instructions is through the secretary of state. Occasionally, permanent representatives will speak to the president and the national security adviser. They need to be cautious and careful in keeping the secretary informed under those circumstances, especially if they've got a different set of instructions or a different set of issues to cover. Normally the administration, certainly the Bush administration, worked in a collegial and close way. There was very little daylight between President Bush, Secretary Baker and the National Security Advisor General Scowcroft. They tended to stay together and keep each other well informed. So there was little I think that would come as a surprise from one to the other but it was still incumbent to keep them, especially the secretary informed, consulted and providing instructions.

The general relationship is similar to other ambassadors in a sense that there is an assistant secretary for international organizational affairs who sends instructions. That happened to be John Bolton when I was there. John brought, as we have seen, his own special view about the UN and how it should operate and which direction it should go.

I spent some time in Washington I had a Washington office. Ann Hollick who had worked for me in oceans and scientific affairs became the head of my Washington office. My Washington office generally kept their ear to the ground and told me what was going on, helped me make appointments and set up relationships when I was in Washington. They reported back to me on what was happening in Washington. They were no substitute for the bureau of international organizational affairs with whom we had numerous daily contacts, most often by phone and by, of course, instruction cables as they came out. This was the way in which a normal mission operated.

There were times when John Bolton and I disagreed, and there were times when we disagreed seriously enough in terms of instructions on issues, which we were negotiating, that I felt I could resort to my access to Secretary Baker. Baker, during my time there, always made himself available on the phone. I didn't over use that channel, I didn't have to, but when I did he was available. He was quick as a whip, understood the problem, could understand where we wanted to go. If he didn't agree with me on my proposed solution, we usually worked out one together that we went ahead with. And if that solution didn't work with my UN opposite numbers, I would be back in touch with him to figure out what the next step would be. Generally speaking we were able to deliver a product in the negotiations of sensitive resolutions particularly related around the Kuwait business that he said he was comfortable with. But I would tell him very frankly what you want I can't get but I can get something else that's close to it or we'll continue to move in that direction and I will let you know where we are. But this was a rare event.

On other occasions obviously as we went along, the State Department had their views as to what we should be doing. I stayed in close touch with Dennis Ross on Middle Eastern questions, which he was handling. Of course I had a lot of experience in the region and generally speaking I could accommodate what Dennis wanted on a particular issue. Dennis was usually pretty open-minded about what it was that I needed to do on particular issues. Occasionally, I would need to go back to language in previous resolutions which we had hoped to avoid but which I needed in particular in order to avoid having the Arab-Israeli question take over the focus in the Security Council from Kuwait. This was especially true when we were building up to an important resolution, including the use of force resolution and that had priority. Dennis and I were able usually to work out an arrangement or a set of possibilities that we could work with that on the one hand wouldn't shoot down what he was working on from the UN view nor do the same for me.

There was, of course, in the Middle East a constant effort, particularly on the part of the Palestinians who had an observer mission but were very powerful, to move Arab-Israeli issues into the General Assembly where they had a strong voting block and an opportunity to pass resolutions which from their perspective were supportive of their goals. With in respect to the Israelis, the impact was extremely negative. The General Assembly resolutions are not binding. They are advisory or recommendatory as opposed to certain resolutions passed in the Security Council which are mandatory. Of course, our veto protected us in the Security Council, but during the Kuwait crises we sought to avoid the use of the veto as a way to continue to keep the members of the Security Council working with us on the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait by not introducing divisive issues. Saddam's strategy was the opposite -- cloak the invasion in Kuwait somehow in the mantle of being the first step toward the liberation of Jerusalem as far fetched as

that sounds. The use of the veto was always sensitive and always difficult and we successfully did avoid having to use the veto during my service after May of 1990. The last veto I cast was the end of May in 1990 before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. As a matter of our policy in terms of getting things done in the UN we tried to avoid that as much as we could.

People from Washington would come up and visit New York often talking to groups at the UN. I think John's approach was fairly heavy handed and as a result tended to leave a little more wreckage on the landscape than we liked when he visited...

*Q: This is John Bolton?*

PICKERING: John Bolton...than we liked but it always helped us to have folks in New York understand what we had to deal with in Washington. So it wasn't completely useless from that perspective.

*Q: This, of course, is this great clawing that every American diplomat says, "Yeah, I'd love to do that but I've got Congress or..."*

PICKERING: Yes. We would say there are some tough guys in Washington and you know them all and I have to deal with them. We didn't do that often, but we did when there were occasions when we had difficult issues to deal with.

We did not have a big problem with UN arrearages when I was there. We had some but not a huge one. That didn't consume us the way it did later missions. The tremendous work that Dick Holbrooke had to do at the end of the '90s to get us back in shape over the Congress and with the UN mission is an example of how consuming the budget arrearages issue can become.

We dealt with a wide number of issues that normally people never think of. You and I can remember some of them. At one point Senator Stephens called me, early on in my tenure, I may have put this on the tape but it was an interesting point, and said, "Can you get a resolution in the General Assembly on driftnet fishing?"

*Q: Senator Stevens from Alaska?*

PICKERING: Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska and I said, "Senator, let me try, let me see what we can do." We did get a resolution on driftnet fishing and he was grateful for it and said so. The idea there was that that resolution while recommendatory actually ended up stopping the majority of driftnet fishing in high-seas areas where the Alaskans were concerned by the survival of the salmon fishery in Alaska, which was enormously valuable from their perspective. So our ability to do things like that from time to time was also in a part of the way things looked and I said to Senator Stevens, "This may not be a binding resolution." He said, "I don't care. If you get that resolution I think we have all of the moxie around the fishing community to get the thing stopped."

We also had another interesting issue at the UN at the time, which was what to do about the law of the sea treaty. I had worked on the law of the sea treaty when Elliott Richardson ran the

negotiations and I was assistant secretary in OES. Not that we made a huge contribution but a number of our people were actively involved in the delegation and particularly on the fisheries side where we had some real expertise, but in other areas as well. As you probably recall, it turned out that here in the U.S., particularly with a number of U.S. firms with a potential interest in sea-bed mining and a number of congressional members who were interested in those firms, that they didn't particularly like that aspect of the law of the sea treaty. They thought generally it was a imposition of an international regime in the high-seas areas where the open capability to compete -- and the enormous technological capability and financial capacity of the United States meant that had an upper hand for a time in things like seabed mining. We had to accept limitations on operating on a free and open basis to accommodate the needs of the international community to get the treaty. Overall, it was important for us in a wide range of other areas most importantly for the U.S. Navy and continued access to the high seas for our and our allies vessels especially through critical straits and around and nearby archipelagos which were tending to expand their jurisdiction that we accept and ratify the treaty.

As a result, early on we began to talk with law of the sea people in the US about what could be done since we had signed but not ratified the agreement. That meant we could expect others to abide by it with us, but we had no rights in the institutions which were engaged in implementing and later interpreting the treaty. The UN had an undersecretary general from Fiji, a particularly capable man, Satya Nandan, who wanted to work with us to establish a way of modifying the portion of the law of the sea treaty, Part 11, that dealt with seabed mining -- to put it into shape where both the developing countries and the United States could broadly accept it. The overall purpose was to remove what was the principal obstacle in the Reagan administration to U.S. acceptance of the treaty. We began the process and it was a long one and some of it related to our being able to support changes in traditional annual resolutions in the General Assembly on the law of the sea as a signal that the U.S. was prepared to move in a positive direction. I found Secretary Baker in general was very positive on the opportunity to move ahead and said, "Obviously, be cautious and do not create a rumpus but see what you can do to move this particular process along," which we did. Over a period of time we got a consultative group established under the secretary general to discuss these issues.

Then long after I left, this group was able, as a result of the start-up work that we had accomplished, to negotiate a protocol to the law of the sea treaty, which, in effect, satisfied the U.S. objections to Part 11 of the treaty. That put us into a position to become a party to the treaty. We failed to ratify during the Clinton administration, during the first years when the president had a pretty decisive vote in the Senate. It didn't get high enough up on the priorities of treaty ratification. Since then it's remained an un-ratified agreement but a signed one by the United States. So, we are able in effect to support it and part of that came about as a result of some of this work that we were able to start at the UN.

So the UN was an interesting place to be able to do things like that with treaty regimes and with other activities which most people don't look at the UN in terms of having that kind of approach.

We had difficult problems with population programs in the United States and our support for UN population programs in the United Nations.

*Q: Will you explain what the problems were and...*

PICKERING: The problems there were that many in the United States saw the Chinese, in particular, as operating programs with UN money, which they believed, were dedicated to promoting abortion and forceful methods which they didn't accept to create one child families. This was enormously controversial. The Chinese claimed they were not pursuing such methods although there was evidence certainly produced on the other side that indicated that there were certainly things happening that looked like it. To some extent this threatened our whole ability to participate in other areas of non-controversial activity in population. What some key members of the Congress wanted to do was to bring the hammer down on the Chinese. If that meant the end of all UN population programs everywhere so much the better. That was the way it went. So we spent a lot of our time trying to work our way through that thicket.

We spent a lot of our time trying to deal with the new management at the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris where before I had arrived we had withdrawn our participation because of deep concerns about serious mismanagement of the organization.

*Q: The president of that for a long time was, from Africa, was...*

PICKERING: From Senegal Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow. But it was clear that this was operated more as a personal fief than as a UN public international specialized agency. He was replaced by an effective Spaniard by the name of Mayor who was working very hard to move the US back in and hoped to see early changes. You know, we didn't do that until much later, now in the second Bush administration. But over a period of time, we worked with them. They were based in Paris and we had an observer there in Paris. We also worked with them in New York to see, in fact, if we could continue to help them tighten up areas where we saw weaknesses in management and produce the kind of change that would allow us to reenter.

*Q: Well during this time there was some movements that happened, the breakup of the Soviet Union became quite apparent one thinks of essentially white slavery coming but other developments, sort of society was crumbling and all. Did we get very much involved in these things?*

PICKERING: We did, I mean the first and most interesting things -- the first two steps in the breakup of the Soviet Union in '91 was that before the Christmas vacation the then Soviet Ambassador, Yuli Vorontsov, who was an old friend by then, came to see me and said, "What can you tell us about what will happen to us if the Soviet Union goes away with respect to our Security Council membership?" I said, "I'm not a legal expert but we have one and I will get you one of ours. I said my sense is that in state succession arrangements, normally you would be expected to succeed the Soviet Union as Russia. We will get a State Department lawyer to come up who has spent his career working on this and talk to you. So we quietly brought up some legal experts to talk to the Russian mission. I mean we had no real interest with the fall of communism and with the change in the Soviet Union in humiliating Yeltsin or trying to keep them out of the UN or the Security Council or deny them their UN rights and obligations. We may have rued that day later on, but at that time there wasn't another logical successor. There was no good reason

for us to try to take them out of the Security Council and it was unlikely we could do so. There were good reasons in general to have them working with us and to be grateful to us for our support to stay in the Security Council. They had been very helpful on Kuwait. What happened was that the Christmas vacation began with the Soviet Union in the Security Council and it ended with the Russian Federation. While we were away, the Secretariat just changed the nameplates, but nothing else happened. Part of that was consultation with our lawyers, the UN lawyers and the Russian lawyers and others to figure it out and then generally talk to others in the Security Council. No real problem developed with anyone.

The Russians gave us a particularly interesting problem at one point subsequently when 3 of the 4 former US Pacific island trust territories wanted to come in to the UN. New member state's applications went first through the Security Council. The Russians said they didn't want to establish a precedent where break-offs of the Russian Federation like Chechnya might find a way to become members of the UN on a kind of semi- automatic basis. We assured them that that was not the case and that the whole question of trust territories was different because we were the trustees for the UN, neither a colonial power or one subject to a break up in that regard. Besides we assured them that we would not support break-off states as a matter of principle.

*Q: Although when you talk about trust territories, we are talking about the Marshall Islands...*

PICKERING: Marshall Islands.

*Q: And Caroline.*

PICKERING: Palau.

*Q: That sort of thing.*

PICKERING: Yes and the Micronesian Federation. So they were able to come in and then also we went through a long period of bringing in the former constituent republics of the Soviet Union as new members states of the organization. The Baltic's, of course, came first. They broke away before the USSR broke up -- before the final demise of the Soviet Union in late December 1991. The Russians were not happy, but Yeltsin did not oppose it. I can remember that we had a magnificent reception at the Polish mission or consulate general in New York, which is a very large building, to celebrate the three Baltic's simultaneous entrance into the UN. Many of us remember the times over the years when the three Baltic legations stayed here in Washington where aging individuals tried to keep them afloat. The Soviet Union had occupied them in 1940 and then in 1943-44 absorbed them, their territories, their capitals and their people into the USSR. We never recognized that absorption and maintained that position over the years. But many of us felt that it would be a very, very long time if ever before those countries would again achieve widely recognized independence and international stature. It was quite an emotional day to see that particular event happen, as it was to see in addition to Ukraine and Belarus, the three Caucasian republics and the five Stans from Central Asia among others become new members of the United Nations and begin play a significant role in the organization.



It was interesting, of course, that both Belarus and Ukraine under a Stalin-brokered formula from 1945, had independent membership in the UN even though they were entirely surrogates of the Soviet Union. They thus presented the Soviet Union with this unique ability to have three votes instead of just one in the General Assembly and elsewhere for the entire Cold War period. Occasionally, the Ukraine served as a member of the Security Council, and perhaps Belarus, I am not sure. It meant that they got a chance to occupy the one East European seat on the Council

*Q: Was the UN particularly intrusive into social issues, which would include education or anything? I mean did this involve as much...*

PICKERING: It did and the economic and social council, which had become pretty weak and pretty feckless as a result of a kind of galloping expansion, nevertheless played a role in recommending a regular series of resolutions and some general conventions on these kinds of subjects. None of it, I thought, was inimical in the long run to U.S. interest, but we had various agencies and parts of the State Department that kept their eagle eye on these issues. When resolutions came up we didn't like we then worked hard to modify or change them. We were not always entirely successful, but very few of those issues played, what I would call a major role. Because of the refocusing after the end of the Cold War on the Security Council -- on a whole series of very important political questions that came up both in the Middle East and then in Eastern Europe in part with the break-up of Yugoslavia -- that took a lot of time and effort well beyond my service through May of 1992.

*Q: Did you find that your mission was involved in a tutorial role in so many new members coming in from the old Soviet Union and all?*

PICKERING: We did. It was true that a number of those states had the benefits of former Soviet diplomats who had local nationality and who then reverted so they were not completely without experience. We played much less of a role than I think the UN did. Secretary Baker wanted to establish missions in all of these countries and wanted to do so without extra budgetary expense and he managed to do so but it was tough. Once we had established those missions, then they became the centerpiece for tutorial work. But, we worked with them at the UN. We found generally speaking they were comfortable in working with us and comfortable in the kind of newfound atmosphere at the UN in listening to our point of view. They were not regularly, automatically and decisively new votes for the Russian Federation in terms of where it wanted to go.

*Q: What about spies?*

PICKERING: Well, what can one say? It was assumed that in the Soviet days a large number of the Russians and others orbiting in and out of the Soviet mission and Secretariat of the UN had other duties. There was obviously a serious effort on the part of the United States, the FBI had that function in New York, in checking up on these people and making sure, in fact, we knew what they were doing and should their actions become inimical to the interests of the United States they would be asked to leave.

As I remember during my period there, very few such events happened. Nothing really stuck strongly in my mind and the FBI did not push to PNG a lot of people during that three and a half year period.

*Q: I was wondering whether the FBI would say, "Look Igor so-and-so is messing around", and you would go to the Russian or Soviet ambassador and say, "Tell Igor to cool it," or something like that. Did you?*

PICKERING: Well I think they were much more interested in talking with Igor and seeing whether Igor in the traditional sense of the thing would be better off working for us than for his Soviet friends.

*Q: It was an open bar case?*

PICKERING: So that in effect...and occasionally they screwed up one of those things and then we had some backlash from the Soviets.

*Q: Tell me something Tom, you know you have this time in early Fall when all the chiefs, well chief executives, presidents and kings and what have you come and talk to the United Nations. From your point of view, what does it mean? We always play up when our president and I'm sure the other country does, but from a working point of view...*

PICKERING: I would say this -- that occasionally the speeches themselves would have significance -- forward steps, commitments to new programs on the part of the United States, new statements of policy with respect to critical issues, new efforts to try to define directions for the future. Traditionally this would, in particular, come at the advent of a new administration. The president saw the UN platform as an international bully pulpit from which to talk about what it was that he was newly bringing to the table as the American president in the new administration. So that was one feature on the landscape.

The second feature on the landscape was that it involved an enormous amount of bilateral content and while the president generally limited himself to five or six of the most important bilateral issues, the president was there for a day and a half or two days. His program could take in a meeting with the secretary general and a meeting with the president of the General Assembly which were pretty pro forma, a 15-minute kind of touch base. But he would often then have meetings with close allies, sometimes with groups depending upon what was going on, and often with important leaders, China, India, Brazil sometimes, Japan, our major European allies. He used that as a way of catching up on the agenda, with Russia trying to break new ground on a bilateral basis. Then while they were almost purely bilateral, some of them involved things that were happening at the UN, multilateral issues, you could count on a very broad agenda. They would last an hour and they would be at the Waldorf or the president sometimes would go out and see others but often they would come to see him. That was easier for them.

The secretary would have bilateral meetings -some secretaries would have 70 meetings with their counterparts -- some much less depending upon what their appetite was, how interested they were and where they thought they could take the meeting process that they were engaged in.

Those were much more useful in turn because they involved detailed discussions in private bilateral meetings.

The secretaries also would meet with groups. They would meet with the Arab Middle Easterners for breakfast, would meet with the Latin Americans and Caribbean's for a lunch, would meet with other groups on a regional basis as well as having a bilateral with one or two of the individually important players. That gave the secretary an opportunity to sit at the table with them, talk to them about what was going on, hear their points of view and their attitudes. It was generally a pretty good give and take and it helped us because that didn't exclude countries where there would be no bilateral for reasons of time and circumstances. Where the secretary could hold his kind of discussion it usually meant he or she would not have to make a trip soon to the region as well. Usually the president had a reception for all the states with which we had relations and with the UN leaders and perhaps some New Yorkers and others at a place like the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the New York Public Library. A wide range of New Yorkers and U.S. government officials as well as others would be invited. The president would say a few words but he would have some pull-asides with heads of state that would come to these meetings. So, they were in that sense almost bilaterals. It was a useful window into the world. It saved the president an enormous amount of travel as well and most presidents and secretaries have seen it that way.

*Q: Oh yes.*

PICKERING: And for the secretary to be able to have everybody come to New York and in effect become engaged with them there.

*Q: Particularly George Bush, Sr. because he was a great telephonist.*

PICKERING: He was. George Bush, Sr. you know had grown up in foreign affairs. He was ambassador to the UN, represented the U.S. in China before we had full relations, and was Director of Central Intelligence. His background and his interest was very broad.

You had earlier when we set the agenda for this time suggested we talk a little bit about him. I found him extremely interested. He was generous in inviting my wife and me to cabinet functions and social functions around the cabinet and to visits to Camp David. But we would have time chat. He had me several times down at the White House and asked me to come by a little before a cabinet meeting to sit with him and talk about what was going on. It was very clear he was fascinated with what was happening, extremely interested in what was going on. Brent would often join in.

I have the greatest respect for Brent, he is tremendously able, remarkably capable, very, very strong analyst of foreign affairs and obviously has kept his hand in intensively since the time he worked first with Henry Kissinger as his deputy and then subsequently as national security advisor for Nixon and Ford. He then was brought back by President Bush. President Bush had a great deal of respect for him -- and a great deal of give and take with Brent about these major issues.

I found from my first days at the UN, when George Bush was still vice president, he had me over and we spent 45 minutes in the vice president's office then talking about the issues that were coming up and where the UN would fit in it and how he would see that develop. He remained very active on things like the important resolution on the use of force. It could never have been achieved without the tremendous amount of leg and telephone work that both Jim Baker and President Bush did to make that happen. You know big countries don't go to war because their perm reps at the UN say that is the right thing to do. That was above the pay grade there. It was very clear and very obvious that to bring something like to happen, required that highest-level effort.

It was also true that at critical times, we could count on the president and Secretary Baker in working say the Russians where Baker had begun to work very closely with Shevardnadze. Baker brought him along and it was very useful and the president's relationship with Gorbachev was extremely important and valuable. They could put in a word on some of those tougher issues coming out of their regular contacts and their frequent phone calls to help in a way that probably no one else could have done.

*Q: I was thinking Tom. You had the privilege of doing this at a time when you had probably the best-connected foreign policy wise team from the post on down.*

PICKERING: Well we assumed we had a hugely well-connected and smart team. I think that Secretary Baker in his days in Treasury had begun to develop this set of relationships with his Treasury colleagues and with some heads of state and he found it very easy to segue in to State with that background. He had a very strong team -Bob Zoellick, Bob Kimmitt in particular working for him here in Washington. Bob Kimmitt with whom I spent a lot of time was totally engaged but understood and used to the Foreign Service. He was easy to talk with, very bright and with a rapid understanding of what was going on. He was very supportive of the kinds of things that we came up with that we thought we needed to do. From that perspective it was very, very helpful.

*Q: How did you find...what was your impression of the secretary general at that time? It was Boutros Boutros-Ghali wasn't it?*

PICKERING: It was Javier Perez de Cuellar at first and then Boutros-Ghali. First, I thought Javier was an enormous gentleman and an extremely experienced diplomat. He had been through the tough Cold War days of the UN. He saw the days coming where things would open up and was looking for opportunities to move. He had a pretty good staff around him; particularly those people who were close to him. He had a very good sense of when not to over push and he had a very good sense of what could be dealt with in private and what could be dealt with in public. So people like Jean-Claude Aime, who was his chief of staff and with whom I had become acquainted years before in Jordan, we serviced together there, he was then the UN development representative, were excellent to work with. Gianni Picco who I have mentioned, and who dealt with the Iraq-Iran situation and with the U.S. and other hostages and did so very, very adeptly and very carefully working directly with Perez de Cuellar. We worked with Alvaro de Soto who was the conducting the El Salvador negotiations in which we played a role in what I think I described in an earlier tape. They were all very capable people. We didn't see eye-to-eye on

everything but they were easy folks to see, one could talk to them. Marrack (Mig) Goulding who was under secretary general for political affairs in the then British seat, certainly was available to us. Kofi who was doing peacekeeping -- Kofi Annan, was always available and easy to work with, very effective and had an always agreeable manner. Most of the other UN folks I found were also good colleagues.

Martti Ahtisaari, who later became president of Finland but ran the Namibia operation and was the UN undersecretary general for management -- another tremendously capable individual -- who was again quick and easy to work with, understanding and part of the team of Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Perez de Cuellar left at the beginning of '92 and we had previous to that time an election in the Security Council and then the General Assembly and Boutros-Ghali of Egypt was named. Boutros was a bit different. We had had a long process looking at reform maybe lasting a year, begun by the Ford Foundation with particular help of Sir Brian Urquhart who for many, many years, beginning well before Hammarskjold, and who had worked with Hammarskjold as the under secretary general for political affairs, led that process at Ford. He had previously developed the concept of peace-keeping and a number of other UN innovative ideas. From Ford, he began a conversation on a book that he and another gentleman had written about what reforms should be put in place at the UN. We expanded this over a period of time. A very able Australian, Peter Wilenski, now deceased, but had been an extremely successful senior Australian civil servant and represented Australia in New York, became the sort of informal chairman. In the end we had 50-55 permanent representatives from all across the globe working with us on a set of reform activities. The ideas included a deputy secretary general, a cabinet form of government, greater UN secretary general control over appointments, more fidelity to the Charter on merit appointments rather than regional distribution at higher levels, a better budgeting process were some of the key items. It went beyond those and into other areas as well. Jan Eliasson, who was then the Swedish permrep and later became undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs, became president of the general Assembly that last year and then foreign minister of Sweden was very, very much in the center of these kinds of reform activities. (He is in 2114 Deputy Secretary General to Ban Ki-moon)

I, as one member of that group, started early to describe these reform, to Boutros-Ghali shortly after he was elected. It was clear that somewhere he had gotten a sense that these would be a threat to him rather than an advantage. While I tried to show why and how it was an advantage -- I did everything I could and so did others -- to work with Boutros to get him to see and understand that this could have made his incumbency well above the pedestrian. We failed. I think he generally feared it. My analysis was that as a Coptic Christian in a Muslim-dominated Egyptian bureaucracy you had to be cautious about all initiatives that may be put up to you as a way to hem you in. He somehow didn't abandon that mind set and remained skeptical -- concerned and suspicious that these were efforts to control him, to negate his independence, perhaps to introduce other ideas and to somehow take away from him authority which we really wanted to give him. The authority of the Secretary General is very limited. He has to in fact appoint people in accordance with rules that have to do with geographic representation even above merit in many cases. He finds it very hard to release people if I can put it this way it's almost impossible.

His budget is controlled by two committees, a powerful committee -- the 5<sup>th</sup> committee of the General Assembly and the ACABQ. The 5<sup>th</sup> committee itself has to approve it which means in effect this is the one area where smaller states have considerable power to influence where the UN is going, not all necessarily to the good. As a result, the Secretary General has his hands tied. Boutros somehow didn't see that or he saw what we were attempting to do as a threat and so he failed to pick up on it. It died what was then certainly an unnatural death with the exception that the ideas kept coming around because they were certainly ideas that were current. Many of the ideas came back, some of them under Kofi Annan, and have been instituted. Some of them are in proposals currently before the UN for further reform. Many of them are supported by the United States. It was an interesting and sadly a missed opportunity.

Why don't then return to the Security Council on foreign issues, if that makes sense, and talk a little bit about that?

Let's talk a little bit about Security Council reform and go back to the period of '89-'92 when I was first there and talk a little bit about what was going on.

At that point I think it had become clear for important bilateral reasons that the United States would support both Germany and Japan for future permanent membership in the Security Council. The issue was much discussed and we made declarative policy statements at the highest levels to support both of those countries as candidates. We also looked at numbers of members -- at what might work. Some already felt 15 members was too large. and many of us who had served in the Security Council knew that the more you grew beyond the current 15, the more you introduced more process, more difficulties and more delay in rapid movement of the Security Council to deal with some of the more quickly emerging and challenging issues in its agenda. As a result, you could suffer some serious setbacks and maybe even stalemates, not that the Council hadn't already done that on its own. But many of us saw, in effect, that a increase in numbers would be a difficulty.

There are a couple of questions and issues here that need to be taken to account. One of those was at the time, and it still remains the case, do countries contributing their share of the budget and are those which are important world economies and major players in the international scene deserve a permanent seat. Or is it permanently limited to only those who inherited those seats as a result of victory of the United Nations in the Second World War? Permanent membership gives them, in effect, through their ability to control much of the work of the council a strong and unequal position. Their importance and significance to the new organization was seen by some as mandating their permanent membership in the Security Council and their veto position. They would have to provide the bulk of the forces for enforcing the peace if it came to that. They would not join the UN if they were not given preferred positions and the protection of the veto.

Secondly there was also running and still is a "democracy movement". Why shouldn't the Security Council be more democratic, that is a more broadly representative body as a whole. The Council, as you may remember, began as eleven. In '66 it was increased to 15 with a charter change. This was to reflect the fact that the number of members of the UN had increased. It began with less than 40. I guess in the '60s it was up to 80 or 90 and it is now above 190, I think

it is either 192 or 193 members. So people argue just on democratic principles there ought to be more representatives of these countries that don't sit permanently. There has been a reluctance particularly on the part of the permanent members to change. The Chinese have never really thought highly of the possibility of Japanese permanent membership and the Pakistani's would, of course, take gas at the idea that the Indians would become permanent members. Brazil's interest has always meant that Argentina and to some extent Chile would oppose

*Q: And Mexico?*

PICKERING: Mexico was unhappy about Brazil or anyone else from the Hemisphere except Mexico. South Africa and Nigeria were frequently mentioned but what about Algeria or other countries in the region. Then the question arises of how many? Back in the days when I was there, we sort of thought that 20 or 21 would be the max. Then, I think, Dick Holbrooke, he crept it up a little on his watch when he needed some extra help in finding a funding compromise -- support for what he had worked out. I don't know that it is necessarily binding, but it didn't go up too much beyond, probably to 22 or 23 total. In any event, it's in that ballpark.

To me, as a perm rep, and then as someone who has followed it since, this seems to me in large part to be a solution in search of a problem. We had seen what an evolution of democratic representation had done to destroy the effectiveness of the economic and social council. Almost everybody in moments of candor would agree that ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) been much less effective because it's been made too large to be capable of pulling together -- of actually developing the results it is supposed to achieve. We have all of us who have worked there, seen what an increased number of people might do to the cohesion and effectiveness of the Security Council. Certainly, it makes the job of those who would like to use the Council as an effective instrument of foreign policy, particularly to deal with issues of international peace and security, much less capable. Indeed, in some ways a much heavier burden on the backs of those who want to persuade others to go along. There is no question at all, were there to be more permanent members added, equity itself would require that there be more rotating members added. That is where, in fact, the bulk of new membership of the organization itself has come in any event.

There have been compromises suggested since the time that I was there. Countries such as Japan and Germany shouldn't have permanent seats with vetoes, but a new category of seat. They could begin by being on the council much more frequently as non-permanent members. The Italians years ago, former Prime Minister Andreotti, recommended that one way to deal with this problem would be to have a single European seat. Europeans are still struggling for a common foreign policy. Of course Britain and France were totally opposed to the notion that would happen, that they would lose their permanent seats. But in the end, I think as the Europeans work out a common foreign and security policy, they are now a long way from it, it might make sense for them to have such a common seat. Europe is currently over represented both in the permanent seats and rotating seats in the Security Council. Others are looking at who the new players on the world scene will be and should they be included. India certainly ranks high among the states that fit that category. The United States certainly has quietly supported the notion that India might well in the future have a seat without being too forward with respect to when and under what

circumstances this might take place. (Since then the US has been more publicly supportive of India as a permanent member of the Security Council)

Certainly after the time I was there, there was an intensive effort lead by an old colleague of mine, Ambassador Razali, the Malaysian permanent representative, to try to put together a compromise. I think he put together one of the more serious compromises -- a few seats for new permanent representatives and some for others. I don't know whether he got the Council up to 26 or something in that area. There are a number of ideas floating around. It's a perennial. But a change won't happen without two things taking place. One, without the five permanent members agreeing not to exercise their veto to block it and secondly, without a charter change which means that it has to go through many (2/3rds) of the parliaments of the member states. Because this is an international treaty, in those countries where ratification is a parliamentary responsibility, and certainly the U.S. Senate, the parliament will have to approve it. Whether we are anywhere close to doing that or not I am skeptical about. The enormous amount of time it would take to make that happen and the general comfort of the United States with the present configuration of the Council would not argue that it's something on which people will want to spend a whole lot of time to find an answer.

*Q: It looks like rearranging...*

PICKERING: Chairs on a tight cabinet.

*Q: But on any day it doesn't really...it's a feel good thing.*

PICKERING: You can confect arguments in favor of it -- that you will get it closer to the heart of the people of the world, if you have more of such people represented -- other countries. It's not a terrible argument, but it's a difficult argument to propound and I think to succeed in putting forward.

*Q: I can think of one proposal that it would certainly win great support in our Congress and that would be to have a permanent seat for a Muslim league type of person.*

PICKERING: Sure, but in effect they do. What happens is that the Arabs, as a group in a regional sense, were not given a seat. They belonged either to Africa or to Asia regional caucus. It was agreed on a rotating basis either an African seat or an Asian seat is always devoted to one of the Muslim countries. So in effect they have through this convention that they've arrived at a guaranteed seat in the Security Council. It's not a bad arrangement. It's not one that is necessarily particularly easy for other areas or regions to accept.

*Q: Tom, while we are talking about membership, did you find as former ambassador to the nation of Israel and all did you find that Israel expected us to carry their water and drink it? I would think you would have a problem. You have a lot of people who are hostile to Israel in the UN as a country and here we are sort of their protector. Did you have particular issues or problems dealing with the Israeli representative?*



PICKERING: Not really. For some of my time there the Israeli's didn't have a permanent representative. The deputy was a guy who I had served with in Tanzania years ago and we were close friends. He knew that I would always be available to him to talk to him. He was also a traditional Israeli diplomat and he understood the equities in New York. Secondly, I had also served as ambassador in an Arab country and spent a lot of my time talking to the Arabs and working with them.

Two things happened, or three things, we had to contend with. One was Zionism is Racism -- the General Assembly resolution -- we saw within reach of getting it withdrawn. It had never been done before, but we worked very hard on it. We had a lot of support from Washington, I think the notion that Mr. Bolton was the sole reason for the success of that action is vastly over blown but I can't say in fact that he was not helpful -- of course he was helpful. Everybody in Washington who worked on that resolution was helpful, but we also worked on it intensively in New York. We worked on it in a way that the tactic was that I would not take that resolution and introduce it in the General Assembly, which is where it had to come, until we had enough co-sponsors to insure passage. So once that happened and before I introduced it I went around to see individually and in some cases collectively leading Arab countries and I said, "We now have this co-sponsor list, here it is. We are going to take this to a vote." I added, "We can do one of two ways. We can make this into an unmitigated disaster and create endless enmity and harshness and difficulty or we can decide this as it is now inevitable, that it was a mistake and that anathematization of people is not a wise idea in the UN and go through it again. You Arab representatives can decide now to make your statements harsh and vindictive or make them in a gentlemanly way and in a manner that befits the activity that we are undertaking."

Almost all of them said they liked the latter course, they would follow it, that they couldn't speak for Libya or they couldn't speak for somebody else like Syria, but that generally they would do that and they did. We managed the process that way. They were not happy with it but they said they understood it. They were grateful for the opportunity to talk about it and they were grateful they were being brought in to the process.

The second set thing was that whenever we had a catastrophe or a problem in the Middle East they would first attempt to do something in the Security Council. Because we had Kuwait hanging over our head, the Israeli's knew we had to do more creative drafting and less veto wielding than we had in the past. They were generally in favor of it. So at one point in order to deal with Israeli actions in response to Arab actions on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a very sensitive issue, in the end we agreed to some language in the resolution we had used once before. The Israelis didn't like it, but the Israelis knew, in fact, that we had to do this in order to get this particular resolution through and this was not disastrous language. But I can remember that the conference of presidents of major American Jewish organizations invited me up to talk after the resolution had passed. And I, of course, knew what that would be all about. They didn't say so, but they had quite an audience and I was asked to come up and explain exactly what we did and why. I did. I had known all these people over a number of years. I had worked with them all. They didn't particularly like it, but we had this discussion and I explained exactly what we did and why we did it and where we had taken this from and why. I had some emotional responses from the audience and some discussion. It never broke down; it never got into an ad hominem difficulty. I said that in the end this was in the joint interest of the U.S. and Israel. It was in our

interest to get Iraq out of Kuwait and to keep Israel and that set of issues from being linked up to Kuwait. This had the possibility of making a change in the region. And, indeed, it led to the Madrid conference and the effort that President Bush and others made to move the peace process ahead. It ended up at least with the Jordanian peace agreement to compliment the Egyptian peace agreement. So that was the kind of discussion we had.

The third was in the General Assembly, and there in fact there were numerous resolutions some of them habitual that came up every year that were on the Arab agenda. They wanted to push those through. We worked very hard in the General Assembly to grind those down to the point where either we could live with them or they were not a major loss. We worked with the Israeli's in doing that. It was part of our effort to provide in a sense of balance and to keep the peace process from being moved to the Security Council. And as a result then moved away from our bilateral leadership to the UN, which is where the Palestinians wanted to go, because they thought that if they can get peace by votes in the UN, let's do it. The General Assembly can generally be moved in their direction. So that was the constant underlying contest at the UN.

Nowhere did I feel that my past relationships had become a burden or a special problem. I tried to speak frankly with both sides about what the United States saw and where it was going. What I was advising the United States to do in these particular issues was to try move the question ahead toward a resolution. In long and difficult negotiations in the Security Council, under the British presidency, I was enormously helped by David Hannay, the British perm rep. He took a lot of grief for us, but he did it in a superb way. I had to come along with some things that were hard to sell in the United States, but in the end things we were able to benefit from in meeting our goals at the UN. I kept everybody in the Security Council in the negotiations. I said, "We are here to negotiate this resolution, we are going to work at it, it is going to take some time but this is what we want to do it. You will get a resolution out of the Security Council, something you wouldn't have otherwise achieved. I will work with you to get that, but you won't get everything you want."

*Q: You left in '92?*

PICKERING: May of '92.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that maybe you were getting a little too prominent? I'm specifically thinking of Margaret Tutwiler whom I've interviewed. I've never interviewed someone who I had great admiration for but who was so fixed on her principal, i.e., James Baker and all, that you had the feeling that like any...*

PICKERING: Yes, let me give you my feeling on that because it was extremely interesting. By the time I left I didn't feel I was getting prominent at all, things had calmed down and it was well after the end of the Iraq war. It had taken place nine months before. But, I felt that particularly in the period from the first of August, 1990 until the end of November the press was an enormous potential ally of ours and enormously important in doing a couple of things. One, was in conveying to the general public what we were doing in the UN, which I thought I was there supposed to do.

Secondly, it was extremely important to convey to the delegations, both in and out of the Security Council, what was going on so I could have their support -where and how we were going to move. It was like having a earphone, a megaphone in the ear of every member of the organization in a very unusual way.

Thirdly, it was a way of building public pressure collectively on the Security Council -- that it would meet and act. So it had a psychological and tactical importance for the Security Council itself. The fact was that we were hounded by the press and it was almost impossible to walk by them without saying anything without conveying a message. It was very useful for me to go and convey the message of the day which I did and which all of my predecessors had done under similar circumstances.

Occasionally, I would get a bleep from Washington about why did you say that and I said, "Because it is our policy," and they said they don't understand that. I said, "Here's where I got it from and this is where the understanding came from." Then it would go away. Then occasionally somebody would say, "Well, you're talking too much." I said, "Well you have to understand it's part of my job and that's what I have to do to get things done up here. I will continue to do this unless somebody calls me and tells me that they don't want me to it. If they do that then I have a choice to tell them I can't do my job without that, find another boy or, agree that I will do this and here are the bounds. But," I said, "the bounds as far as I can see are established U.S. policy and that supported my objectives in the Security Council. Also. in effect that also has the added value of supporting U.S. policy worldwide, I don't think that I should be deprived of a tool to help me do my job.

Over a period of time, I gather in Washington at least, Margaret felt that this was an intrusion, but their response to this didn't come until much later and then they said, "OK, well we would like to have Tom leave and go to India and we'll send Ed Perkins up." I said, "Fine, I have no entitlement to a job in the administration nor do I have in this particular job." I said, "I thought it was strange because I thought that I had acted in ways in the UN that improved U.S. support and improved our chance of getting agreements. I felt I could continue still to be useful to do that but if that was their decision, fine."

The bulk of the newspaper comment after the leak in the Washington Post saying he gets too much publicity was exactly the opposite. It was favorable and asked why are they doing that? Not that I ginned that up, I had nothing to do with it and I, in fact, tried to stay very low key by saying, "Well, this is a Washington story, I have nothing to do with this and obviously I will stay here as long as the present secretary of state wanted me here." Then I went down, Larry said, "Come on down." Larry said, "We would like to have you go to India." I said, "Larry I would be delighted to go to India." I said, "What's the problem." He said, "Well, you know what the problem is as well as I do it's in the papers." I said, "OK, if that's the problem, there is nothing I can do about that, I will be happy to go to India, throw me into that briar patch."

*Q: By the way, did you find that up in New York...here in Washington as we all know, you pick up the Washington Post and you look at it and that sets your agenda for the day for most people. Did the New York Times do that? I mean not just for the Americans but I mean with the other...*

PICKERING: No, in effect what we did was we very consciously set our agenda for the day. We talked to the press to reinforce those areas where we wanted to go, where we didn't want to talk to them we wouldn't. We kept things quiet until we were ready to talk about them -- things like where we were on the next Kuwait resolution. We tried not to get the press out ahead of us on things where we had to sell the permanent five and then rest of the Security Council until we were ready to do so. Washington sometimes leaked stuff, that wasn't helpful, but it wasn't disastrous. We tried to live in the real world and we understood that. I had a good spokesman who had good contacts and he talked to them and he'd say, "I think you need to meet with so and so." I would say, "Fine, I'll meet with so and so, send him around and we will talk or would you give an interview." But I did a lot of it because it was hard to avoid and you paid a price in getting the job done if it looked like you were running away from the press. The TV was on the walkway over to the building leading to the Security Council or to the General Assembly and they all gathered when there was a meeting. People would say, "What are you going to do today?" and I said, "I hope today we will do the following things." Then when we came out of the meeting they asked "What did you do today?" I would say, "Well, We accomplished this and we're looking to this next resolution coming out and we hope in a couple of days that we'll have it". But I never gave a deadline for anything that I couldn't actually assume that I had the vote to do. I never went into a meeting and said, "I've got the votes just watch us." I always said, "The Security Council has to make up its mind and when it does you will be the first to know."

*Q: I've just seen a musical 1776 and there's a song called "Piddle, Twiddle and Resolve" and I've talked to people who have been to the UN and they are usually people who are lower things but said they've never been at meetings that would bet working over commas and all that.*

PICKERING: Oh we had that a lot.

*Q: OK, we want to talk about resolutions.*

PICKERING: I think that one of the most interesting and challenging, fascinating aspects was the ability personally to participate in negotiations of critical resolutions in the Security Council particularly during the Gulf War where they had the potential for some serious impact. A lot of people dismiss them as just words on paper that tend to disappear but a number of them had important meanings and were very significant. The ability to find your way through a negotiating impasse and deal with some of these questions was an interesting sort of test of a particular kind of diplomacy and in which you don't often get to participate. It's like negotiating text of anything else, treaties.

In a sense some of the resolutions of the Security Council can be compared to generalized treaties. Under the charter everybody is committed to carry them out. They have a mandatory responsibility or a mandatory role or a mandatory capability when the Council acts in a certain way, -- follows a particular formula. In the negotiations, generally speaking, we started with the political section guys who would work the text often first with the British and French, consulting with Washington, then we would have a meeting at the P-3 perm rep level and listen to comments and see if there were difficulties or problems and make suggestions for resolving the text. That went along pretty well. The British and French were helpful and flexible and if we would take into account their concerns. Those generally could be satisfied with maybe a new set

of wording or a different way of pushing forward a particular idea. As you listened to what they had to say you could figure out OK what is it we could put in there that will help them. We did the same with the Russians and Chinese and generally speaking they often didn't have wording changes they just had comments from Moscow that they didn't like something for a certain reason. We would sit down and say, "Well why not phrase it this way or why not put this idea in to meet your needs in Moscow?"

Then we would take it to the broader Security Council membership and as I said we often did that in a form that was 'informally formal'; that is four of the five permanent members would take the text and distribute and explain it to the non-aligned. Now, we were also working with the other members (non non-aligned like Canada or Belgium) of the Security Council but they were generally seven or so of the non-aligned. Then we would ask them to review it. We sometimes would have a subsequent meetings if they wanted. We would take textual changes on the spot if they were broadly acceptable. Other issues that we identified we would then work on and take to Washington or London etc. In some cases we would brief ahead of time, The Africans were particularly important to us in the Kuwait issue. They formed an important block and we would often speak to them ahead of time and particularly since they wanted to work in French most of them we would work with them in French on the text. So while they had an English text we would discuss the question in French, and discuss how to deal with their problems if they had any, and we would always work on explaining it to them in French so they had a very good idea of what it was they were dealing with.

The end result of that was that almost every resolution including some of the most difficult in one way or another, we got in what we thought we needed. We took other things that we had to take, that we didn't particularly like, but were not devastating as part of the discussion. It was interesting sometimes just a change in one word without a fundamental shift in meaning would help with some people. Their understanding of English, I think, was broad but in many cases less encompassing than ours or the British. Sometimes we would find a word that fit, sometimes we would find a word that was a little more Latinate in origin, and for the French speakers, that would help out. Sometimes we would find a word that was a little more ambiguous and that would help.

Then you had to be careful about where you put commas and semicolons as to how to affect the meaning. We got to be careful at parsing the whole...

*Q: Did you have an English grammarian on your staff, I mean somebody who looked it up, basically a lawyer but who looked at the text?*

PICKERING: We had Bob Rosenstock who was our lawyer and was tremendously good. But we also all had a pretty good idea of what it was we were doing and in the end we never really had anything finally agreed until Bob had looked it all over and said this from his perspective, it looked OK. He would assure that the text had all the meanings that he thought we wanted to achieve. He would occasionally ask you what do you want to do here and said, "Well why not it some other way." Bob had enormous experience so he was a big help when we got into a pinch. He would sometimes say, "Well you know six years ago we solved that problem this way."

*Q: What about the Chinese? Because here they are coming from a ideograph language and I mean...*

PICKERING: The Chinese had very capable English speakers. The present permanent representative of China in New York was the counselor of the embassy and his English is extremely good. They seemed to have no difficulties in managing English and no real language setbacks. Most folks who get to the Security Council can work in English, but in almost all the informal meetings we had interpretation into five or six languages. It was only when we elected the secretary general that we threw the interpreters out and we used a Belgian, the current ambassador here who was then the deputy of the Belgian mission and his English and French were so good that we just used him as an interpreter. Then the only other language we worked in was French

*Q: How did you find...each Fall State Department officers of various bureaus seconded up from various areas, how did you find sort of their expertise or their contacts? How did you find the system?*

PICKERING: Well most of them were enormously good because they had brought real service in the region as part of their background.. They were known, either personally known by the crop of UN diplomats up there or they were known because they had served in four or five countries in the region. Everybody would say well we know so and so, we trust his judgment, he knows our country, speaks our language, understands it, has good contacts with us so that generally got around. They all were up-to-date on the key issues in the region. So while you were not somebody who was known by everyone in let's say the Latin caucus, the fact was that you had served in six Latin countries or five, you spoke Spanish, maybe Portuguese and maybe even French and that you were generally known as a go-to guy who could get things done made the whole idea work well. The UN folks were happy because they all want contacts with the U.S. mission. So I thought this was an enormously important way of building on the expertise that we already had.

I found language important up there. In informal meetings of the Security Council particularly when I was working the Cuban issues, I would use Spanish and let everybody else listen in whatever language they wanted. In part, I went out of my way to diffuse the Cuban opportunity to raise and parade issues by mentioning every time I could do so, the fact that the US and Cuban position was the same and ask the Council to record informally another Cuban American agreement! Also, I used to write notes in Swahili to the Zairian who spoke the language, and the Yemeni sat between us, and of course Swahili is about thirty percent Arabic, but written in Latin characters. I would never fold the notes, I would just say for Zaire and he was good enough, he didn't read it, his English was perfect as well.

*Q: Were you there, I can't remember, during our little war with Panama?*

PICKERING: Sure, absolutely.

*Q: I don't think we've talked about that.*

PICKERING: No, no I don't think we talked about it.

*Q: How did that set?*

PICKERING: It was the early stage before Kuwait. Cuba had just become a member of the Security Council. The buildup took place in Washington and I think Grenada had happened before that but I was notably...

*Q: Grenada was back in the early '80s.*

PICKERING: Late '80s, '87 or '88. I was not notably in the picture on Panama until it hit and suddenly I got in the picture. So I knew roughly what was coming when it started but there wasn't much we could do at the UN. The Cuban organized a bandwagon and a condemnatory resolution. We fought about that in the Security Council. In the end we got enough votes to block it -- it didn't get nine votes. It was fascinating because at the time, I forget who was president of the Security Council, I certainly wasn't, but when the president announced the vote he announced the wrong vote -anticipating that my veto would be the only thing to kill the resolution. When you have a veto it says the resolution receives so many votes but owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council it doesn't pass. That is what the president of the council said because I had voted against it. But so did the British and the French and so did enough other people to assure that it didn't pass because it didn't get nine votes. So we had to interrupt the president and say no, this is the wrong conclusion. He may have been wrongly advised too by the secretariat which usually provided notes to the president on conducting the meeting I didn't want to be in a position to exercise a veto if I didn't have to.

But I remember it was a difficult time. We had prior to that the U.S. takeover of Cuban ship that was going from a Cuban port to Mexico that we knew was carrying contraband so that caused a lot of problems. But we settled that without having to resort to a resolution and maybe we had just speeches in a regular session...I can remember very early on, I think when I was first president of the Security Council, which was early in 1989. We had an endless debate, three day debate, over the Middle East that everybody wanted to come in and talk about. Nothing was happening, things had to be done. But it was a particularly feckless enterprise, but in the Cuban boat thing and later on Panama we got through in reasonable shape. I was surprised given where we had come from.

*Q: How did you find it? Did you have many discussions with the Cuban representative?*

PICKERING: Yes, we did have a couple, we had some. When I first arrived the Cuban representative was a gentleman by the name of Oscar Romero who was a black Cuban, very capable. I had a lot of respect for him and he was the guy who spent all his time in organizing the Cuban election to the Security Council, which happily took place on Dick Walters watch not on mine. So when I was there, it was a fait accompli. On social occasions, although I didn't have instructions to do so, and I sort of had instructions not to, I would go and talk to Oscar. He was willing to talk. I wanted just to get to know him and to understand what his interests were and where he was coming from. I had assumed he would be their representative in the Security Council.

Well that was in the autumn. They replaced Oscar Romero and they brought Ricardo Alarcon. Ricardo is now the number three guy in Cuba; He is the head of the Cuban National Assembly. He was a white Cuban, a committed communist, close to Fidel and who had served in the UN previously and loved to make speeches.

*Q: He was one of the group isn't he who's called "Los Talibanos" (the Taliban) or something?*

PICKERING: Los "Talibanistas".

*Q: "Los Talibanistas", yeah.*

PICKERING: Anyway that set everybody's teeth a little bit on edge. So when they came into the Security Council, they came under this cloud; that they had taken a well respected and successful man from the developing world and in fact had replaced him with a political zealot. When Ricardo wanted to try to run the Security Council, what I did was I followed a particular tactic. It just developed over time. Every time in a discussion in the Security Council in the informal meetings, I never did it in the formal meetings, which were in public. In the informal meetings, any time that I could agree with Ricardo, I said so. And I said, "Here is another example of Cuban-American agreement about how to deal with the world's problems and this is a good thing." So I tried to minimize his ability to be disruptive and everybody knew this was sort of pulling his leg except he never seemed to get it. But he could never find real bases to complain. Everybody would sort of dismiss it, he is just taking time and screwing us up and you know Pickering has been careful with him. I never debated him; I just never had anything that made that necessary. I just let him run off and then if he ever said anything that I could agree with as a matter of policy I always would call attention to it. I always did it in Spanish and said this was another example of Cuban-American agreement.

*Q: Well this does bring up something. By the time you got there or during that time sort of Marxist rhetoric I guess had sort of gone down the tube or pretty....*

PICKERING: Well it was a fading influence, the Soviet Union was about to break up and things were not going well in that arena. A couple of times with the permission of Bernie Aronson, who was the assistant secretary...

*Q: Aronson?*

PICKERING: Yeah, Bernie Aronson. Alec and I would go by and see Ricardo at the Cuban mission and talk to him about can we sit down and have a better talk about El Salvador, can we sit down and kind of work our way through this problem or that problem? Are you willing to have these kinds of contacts and we never got anything back, I guess it fell on infertile ground. We did seek to push an opening in this regard.

*Q: While you were doing that did you have the feeling that there were hostile eyes coming from Miami looking over your shoulder?*



PICKERING: Possibly, but that was not an issue. I did it only with Bernie's instructions and his permission but as a kind of freelance thing.

*Q: Well did you find speaking of this groups, I mean New York has got so many exile émigré groups and all. Did they bother you at all?*

PICKERING: Not excessively, they came by the mission, they saw people, they made their points but we were in a particularly interesting period because all of a sudden we were now establishing relations with places like Albania. It was funny because traditionally for most of the time, the way the seating worked in the UN, Albania used to sit behind the United States and in some cases directly behind the United States and we never had contact. I can remember that the Albanians had gone to see Ron Spiers who was undersecretary general for General Assembly affairs because he was an American and said, "We want to establish relations with the United States." So Ron sent it over to us and we reported to Washington. The Washington guys I guess wanted to do the meetings so they said, "We'll come up," but they said, "Will you call and set up the meeting?" I said, "I will be delighted." So I called the Albanian mission and they said, "Who is this?" and I said, "This is the American ambassador." I could hear a gulp from the other end of the line and so then I talked to the Albanian who I had never talked to before, but I knew spoke perfect English and I said, "I understand that there may be an opportunity for us to discuss this. We will bring a team up to New York, are you ready to go ahead and do it?" He said, "Yes, absolutely, I've been waiting for years for this phone call."

*Q: This is Tape 15, Side 1, with Tom Pickering. Well I guess we are pretty much at the end of this UN period so we'll talk about going off to India. But you might want to sum up or you can sum up now how did you feel when you left the UN?*

PICKERING: Well, I certainly had been prepared mentally -- until my leaving and this India assignment came up -- to stay through the end of the term. It was a little bit of a disappointment, but not serious and the fact of going to India was something that I had begun to look forward to as had my wife Alice.

I felt that in terms of accomplishments it was perhaps my best tour, both because I had lots of responsibility and we were able as a team to deliver to Washington on almost all of the critical areas that we were charged with coming through on. I felt that the UN had moved back into the center or close to the center of American foreign policy interests. We had shown that the Security Council could be a force to support and strengthen American policy. It was no longer the purely a negative Cold War battleground where we had to fight to get damage limitation on a constant basis. We had helped to turn it around. It for a time, in the eyes of the world public during Kuwait, temporarily at least, the most important "club" in the world. The members of the Council understood they had serious responsibilities and acted accordingly. We were able to use the Security Council, I wouldn't say manipulate it, but to make use of it as, in fact, it was set up to do under the Charter of the UN, to deal with a whole set of peace and security issues where we had important national interests.

I was a little concerned that to some extent we had over extended. The success of the Security Council in Kuwait had turned attention to it. Then the world expected next it would deal with the

break-up of Yugoslavia, with Somalia and other issues where there was much less to work with. Our U.S. engagement was less, there was much less forthcoming on military involvement and funding, all of which had been critical ingredients in our success in the UN in dealing with Kuwait. While the sanctions didn't work in the context of bringing Saddam to heel, the combination of the sanctions, the UN legal authority, the legitimacy and the international coalition a good portion of which flowed through the UN and was reinforced by the Security Council, did work. Its success put us in a position where we looked to the Security Council to repeat that success. I had some regrets at the way in which we ended the conflict, not that I wanted to go to Baghdad, but that I had this view that we should have had a very large UN zone inside Iraq's borders, in the desert area of southern Iraq, and that we could be in the long run much more influential if the UN were engaged in part of that zone. That was within reach and that was dismissed, I think, too peremptorily, I understand, by Schwarzkopf and perhaps by Colin Powell, as something they didn't want to get involved in, but which we thought was a wise potentially important move. I've talked about that elsewhere on the tapes.

In Somalia and Yugoslavia, we had a less clear view of our goal. We used the Council to build up smaller peacekeeping forces. We over extended the reach of our policy and under supported it in the UN. That meant that the Kuwait approach was not replicated and we took a longer time and dealt in a more uncertain way with those issue. There were differences with the Russians which had been bridged or sublimated in Kuwait but now appeared in Yugoslavia.

*Q: OK well we'll pick this up when you are off to India in 1992. Good.*

*Q: OK today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, the Ides of December 2006. Tom, we are talking about what year?*

PICKERING: 1992.

*Q: How did this come about?*

PICKERING: I think you would find that interesting and I would too. About, I can't remember, February or March maybe of 1992 I read in the Washington Post an interesting story that I had become a problem in effect in New York and that I was going to be gotten rid of one way or another. Not a very complementary story although one that obviously came out of the Washington dope circuit. So I checked up a little bit on it, I got kind of different remarks from different people but eventually maybe a month later Larry called me...

*Q: Larry Eagleburger?*

PICKERING: Larry Eagleburger who was deputy secretary at the time and asked if I could come down and see him. I said, "Of course Larry I'll be down, what's it about?" He said, "Well, I'll tell you when you get here." So that was one of those interesting...it was a good conversation. Larry said that the secretary wanted me to go off somewhere else and he offered me India. I said, "What was the problem?" and he said, "Well, I'm not one hundred percent sure." But it was very clear from the...he said the Post story wasn't wrong. The story basically indicated a sense of concern or neuralgia over the public kind of exposure I guess is the right word that I had as UN

ambassador. But at that point in early 1992 there was almost none. It had all died down, most of that took place in the period of 1990 dealing with the twelve resolutions that we passed in the Security Council having to do with boxing in Iraq if you like, and with the use of force and to a significant extent in the passage of Resolution 687, the cease fire resolution in April of 1991.

In any event, it seemed to me to be a kind of r retribution rather than real. But in any event the sense I had was, of course, in my job, the press was there and it was a major feature on the landscape and it was a major tool for me as the UN representative. I had used the press briefings to keep the team that we had built in the Security Council in line and operating, because I couldn't call every one of them every day with every piece of information nor could my staff. It also helped with the whole rest of the UN, including the general assembly which was ardently interested in what we were doing and potentially a difficult problem if they got the idea that the Security Council was operating without any information flowing to them. Other people were flowing information too some of it wrong, some of it right, so it was an important way to get the U.S. position across. Perhaps it was the only effective way to do so, since we were there on the spot dealing with it. So from that perspective I found it a very important piece of diplomacy.

But in any event, I was a disciplined Foreign Service officer, I was given assignments by the secretary, I had no right to this assignment or that assignment. I think that's a fundamental mistake people tend to make as they move up in the Foreign Service to believe that they have some ownership of an assignment. I had signed up on that basis and my wife and I had always wanted to go to India. I had been three and a half years at the UN, it was a nice tour and my feeling was that the bulk of the press we heard from at least, and the public reactions, didn't redound to the advantage to the folks who had put out the story. But that was not an interest I had in promoting.

*Q: I think we probably mentioned last time but there is this problem that as with many secretaries a coterie as symbols around it. This happened to be quite an effective one around Baker, I mean this is my perspective but their message was Jim Baker and I think they counted the number of lines that came out about Thomas Pickering and the number of lines that came about James Baker and probably the total should reach, particularly we are talking probably about Margaret Tutwiler but...*

PICKERING: I think all of that was true. Never did the secretary mention this to me. I frankly never spent a lot of time going into further investigation because I had had a very good period of service at the UN. I had hoped to stay until the end of the tour and the end of the administration. But that was not something that was a life or death issue or something that I felt that I was owed by anybody, that was not the issue. So when that all came up I kind of said, "Gee, do you guys really want to do this? Do you know what you are doing?" Because we had a very good position in New York, I think we were well accepted in New York, I think we had a very strong team in New York.

In any event, they had asked Ed Perkins who was a great choice to come up and take my place. That too, I think, was something that I was respectful of and that I was not going to enter into a contest over. Now what was interesting, of course, was they had waited so long to do this. I think they waited until the situation had calmed down and there was an opening at the time to go ahead

and do it. But I mean this happens in the Foreign Service and your views on how many lines individuals got and the role of Margaret Tutwiler I guess have to remain your views. She should be obviously asked about it but I retained excellent relations with Secretary Baker and with Margaret over the years and I've never...

*Q: I've had a very good set of interviews with Margaret Tutwiler. No, I'm just saying people have jobs to do and sometimes...it really doesn't make it...life goes on and particularly India I think would be, particularly for somebody with your broad interest I think it would be a hell of a lot of fun.*

PICKERING: Oh it was and I had always been interested in India and my wife had always been interested in India. So we went off to India for eight to ten months.

*Q: Wow, OK India for eight months. What was the situation in India I mean both internally and then vis-à-vis America?*

PICKERING: Well Bill Clark, my predecessor, had left several months before I arrived. I was able to get out there fairly quickly. I think that I left New York near the end of May and I traveled to India in early August. The situation in India was that India and the United States were still living under what I would call the Cold War pressures and strains. To some extent the Indians had always felt unhappy about the U.S. relationship in a number of ways.

One, I think was the failure to meet expectations. That is the world's two largest democracies ought to have good relations, they ought to have a lot in common and over the period of years at various times India and the United States have had very good relations. In the Kennedy years the relations were particularly good. John Kenneth Galbraith was the ambassador, Jackie Kennedy came for a visit, I don't think that...

*Q: They had a nice little war that we gave some support to...*

PICKERING: Well that war broke out between China and India in 1962. We certainly took India's side, we supported India and that may have been one of the high points. But we had an extraordinary number of really quite distinguished ambassadors in India who had taken a personal interest in the country. John Kenneth Galbraith, Chester Bowles was there, Bob Goheen had been there, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, so there was a lot of effort on the part of various administrations.

I would suppose the nadir came at the time of the Nixon administration when Henry Kissinger decided to send the aircraft carrier Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal at a period when it was self evidently obvious that Pakistan was about to lose its eastern wing, if I could call it that, and Bangladesh was about to emerge.

*Q: This was the tilt to Pakistan?*

PICKERING: The tilt to Pakistan and the Indian's considered that an ungracious insult to them. The Indians had always seen themselves as the largest and strongest state in South Asia and

therefore ought to be the recognized regional leader. Throughout the Cold War period where the United States depended heavily on Pakistan as a major bulwark, first in the southeast Asia treaty organization and a link to far eastern treaty allies, the Dulles period, right on through to support in Afghanistan. The Indians always were upset by the fact that on the one hand the United States official policy was balance, but the effect of the United States policy, because it was much more actively engaged in Pakistan than in India, was perceived as a tilt toward Pakistan as they saw it. Pakistan was much more actively engaged in political and security issues and because they tended to be the focus of attention as a result, it made it appear as if Pakistan was maybe rising above balance- above even handedness. U.S. policy in India was mainly devoted to things like providing economic aid and assistance, but that dwindled down. The Indians had reservations about our role in Vietnam. They saw us as unwilling to respect the non-aligned world in the main. Their domestic policies were heavily built on London School of Economic socialism. In particular those differences irritated the Republicans and occasionally irked the Democrats. We had very little if any relationship with Indian military following the wind down from the '62 war with the provision of some American assistance on the military side.

Also, we had always seen India's choice of a close relationship with the Soviet Union and a military equipment relationship with the Soviet Union as adding to the strains and tensions in the relationship. It was not easily understood in the United States side in the zero sum politics of the Cold War and was thought in effect to be an effort by India to be less than even-handed and balanced. In fact there was much more Indian trade with the former Soviet Union in large part because the former Soviet Union was willing to accept barter trade -- tea for weapons. It was indeed complimentary, the Russians drank tea, India was a good source of tea, India needed from its perspective modern weapons and Russia was a good source of modern weapons, so why not barter.

*Q: Sure.*

PICKERING: So that worked out well for India. The Soviet Union played their cards favorably and that gave the Indians good deals on those kinds of issues. The Russians did less in the area of economic aid and economic development and much less in terms of efforts to persuade the Indians that either economic reform or new directions in foreign policy of a more even-handed variety should be adopted. The Russians enjoyed being in this close relationship. Over the years a number of very capable Russian ambassadors had represented the Soviet Union, including an old friend of mine who became my colleague in New York, Yuli Vorontsov.

They had had other specialists including Vyacheslav Trubnikov who later became head of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) after Primakov left, following the breakup of the Soviet Union, but is and remains an India expert and is the current Russian ambassador in India today (2006). He had a great deal of expertise in India and a wide range of contacts. So that was not to our advantage.

The Indian-Chinese relationship remained in tension, but from our perspective certainly in the period before Kissinger made his first trip in 1971 to China, the China relationship was always looked at suspiciously. Were the Indians in a sense going to patch up? Of course, much of this stemmed from Bandung, the non-aligned movement, the five principals of non-alignment and the

Hindi phrase “Hindi Chini bhai bhai,” which was essentially an Indian sign of well, a very good, kind of thing. So much of that also added to the negative flavor in our relationship. Over time, with the border differences with China, the Soviet relationship was also seen in India as a counterweight to Chinese pressures on India for a settlement more favorable to China.

Finally India’s internal bureaucratic architecture was heavily influenced and molded both in its structure and in its opinions by a combination of British colonialism and the London School of Economics. It was easy to socialize a very large governmental structure and socialization, more in European terms than in the Communist sense, became a very important objective of Nehru in the early days. This led to what I would call much of the London School of Economic view of the United States. A certain amount of suspicion, a certain amount of concern, particularly when the United States was in the hands of more conservative Republicans rather than left-leaning Democrats -- a certain amount of tension in the issue. The governmental arrangements also led to the evolution of the ‘license Raj’. Strict governmental controls lent themselves to exploitation by poorly paid government servants who were willing to do their jobs of issuing permits if compensated from the outside. American presidents didn’t often exert themselves to visit. President Nixon and Henry Kissinger did not have remarkably close relations with Indira Gandhi for all of the reasons having to do with our many differences and Henry’s view at the time was heavily colored by Pakistan’s really quite remarkable role in brokering the quiet arrangements for his first visit to China, something he didn’t want to upset or rupture as well.

Finally I think in traditional terms, the British had tended to favor the martial races in India and the martial races tended to be Muslims. They were majority recruits for the army and the British Indian army had a played long role in the country and had some influence on British attitudes. So in a sense Pakistan was the inheritor of what one would call the more martial races portion of the British India experience and Pakistan was seen as a potential future base area for the UK and that added to some of the tension.

So all of these, I think, were interesting bits and pieces. Now the other part of what was happening in India was that India had been helpful to the United States at the time of Iraq. While it was uncomfortable in doing so, it permitted a large number of over flights bringing U.S. airborne reinforcements into Saudi Arabia at a crucial time because they understood the aggression. We had worked hard with India but with not a lot of success in helping to remove a lot of Indians who got trapped in Iraq where they were doing a lot of contract labor for construction programs all across Iraq. But we worked hard to try to do that. India was on the Security Council through a good bit of this period and I had close relationships with Chinmaya Gharekhan who was the Indian representative. He was a very effective, very professional representative and someone who in my view I could talk with and who was prepared to work, and to listen and to be part of the Security Council effort rather than to take a separate view. The Indians were supportive.

The third point was that India at that time under Narasimha Rao as prime minister was beginning what was clearly an economic reform. Something that the Indians, I think, saw in a serious way as the economic leadership of the country was failing, India was failing economically to produce the kind of change and growth that were really necessary for a country of over a billion people at that point and growing rapidly with tremendous burdens. Narasimha Rao had appointed

Manmohan Singh, a Sikh, as his finance minister -- a Sikh educated at Oxford, a gentleman whose understanding of modern economics was quite large and whose leadership ability even though he was a very quiet, almost retiring man, was large in the Indian sense because of his central wisdom and his ability to handle difficult problems carefully without excitement but with deftness and with intelligence. He was supported in this by two other people who are worth mentioning because they are now major players on the Indian economics scene. Another Sikh called Montek Singh Ahluwalia who was the finance secretary, the top civil servant for Manmohan Singh in the finance ministry and also was part of the brains trust and worked closely with Manmohan Singh in bringing about these economic reforms, The reform task was not easy because of the holdover of what one would have to say of favoritism and dislike of privatization, opening up the economy, real competition, the reduction of government role and the selection of a whole series of measures that tended to move the government out of the center of the economy and the market back in. They were all difficult to undertake and unpopular with many

. They all broke somebody's curry bowl, if I can use that, so they were hard.

The third individual who was then minister of commerce for my time there -- a man by the name of Chidambaram, a south Indian, again a very astute and capable economist and at the moment t playing a major role in India's political life. After an intervening period when I was there, of the rule of the Hindu Nationalist party (the BJP), the Congress Party came back in three years ago to form a coalition and Manmohan Singh is now prime minister, Chidambaram is finance minister and Montek Singh Ahluwalia runs the Indian National planning Board directly for the prime minister, a tremendously influential position. So it was interesting that I saw the early days of what was later to emerge as a continuing reform related Congress Party leadership.

In those days the Congress Party was not saddled with the kind of coalition which has emerged because India since then has developed many more parties. It's gone away from a monolithic that brought independence and with it an almost one party state. India was not quite a one party state but for a long period of time, and I was there at the end of one party statism, Congress rule prevailed even at the beginning of these changes taking place.

The third change was the beginning of an opening up of a relationship with the United States. It was hard, it wasn't easy, it took time and it was beginning to start, but it was only the very beginnings of what would be happening over time.

*Q: One of the things that you were mentioning too I think there was the personal relationship both the Nehru's, father and the daughter, really didn't like...I mean Americans found them to be condescending and it was not on the personal level they didn't get on very well with presidents and secretaries of state.*

PICKERING: Not all but some. It was more uneven than that. To read it all as a total kind of snooty Indian Brahman nose in the air attitude was wrong. The truth was that Jawaharlal Nehru and to some extent many other Indians, all had excellent educations and high confidence in their abilities, much of it well placed. As a result, they tended not to find it easy to suffer fools gladly. Because of America's rough and ready ways and to some extent their long association with the British intellectual aristocracy, they saw us a little more as country cousins and some American

presidents as less urbane than the British certainly -- and some American presidents whose policies they just didn't like. I think that Richard Nixon's policy, with both respect to Pakistan, and the rest of Asia including India, where we were still in the midst of the Cold War and up against the Communists, was not seen by the Indians as neither friendly nor understanding of India. It was the expression "if you are not with us you are against us" that played a role in coloring attitudes. To some extent people in the United States tended to see Indians in a disparaging light. The very few Indians that they met were seen as part of the teeming masses almost on another earth, far away and remote and without much traction in terms of issues that they were interested in. In the meantime, the Indian leadership was, as you said, kind of nose in the air proud, very difficult to deal with, somewhat set in their ways and to some extent looking down their noses at the United States particularly when there were serious policy differences and even disagreements.

*Q: You mention the London School of Economics so I think the influence has been more pernicious than Leninism at this stage.*

PICKERING: Well maybe, certainly in India I would say.

*Q: Well in Africa too there are a lot of places. But anyway, Tom, did you sense that you might say I don't know in real politic or whatever you want to call it the Indians were able to play they had the Soviet Union kind of behind them and play that off and all of a sudden it was gone. So India really had to start out again as a...*

PICKERING: It was enormously important to raise that. I was about to talk about the third leg kind of the change in India that's going on and still going on which is the U.S. relationship. A good share of what India was thinking about post-'91 and the disappearance of the Soviet Union was that (A) the Soviet Union is probably gone forever and (B) We can retain a good relationships with Russia but it will not be any longer world power both because of the political disarray and the economic dislocation that the Russians were going through. A lot of that obviously is now heavily reflected in Indian thinking and helped ease the way for a better relationship with the US.

They began to look around and see who had the horses and, of course, we had the horses. They began to look at where world was going and saw us leading it. And while the old hang over still remained there of Nehru socialism and close links with the USSR, nothing was chiseled in stone that said inevitably the U.S. and India will always be at odds. They began a process of bringing things closer together, We began a process to try to follow in very small ways. It was one of those early stage efforts at change where the ambassador writes lots of cables and over a period of time like water wearing away stone it begins to have a little bit of an effect. But it wasn't a huge effect. We still had spats and difficulties about small questions that came up from time to time that tended to color the relationship.

I had been engaged in India when I was assistant secretary in Oceans, Environment and Science. It was very clear to me almost immediately when I started paying attention to India where I was ex-officio member of a U.S.-Indian group at quite a high level to promote science cooperation



that science had become a main stay of our relationship. It was Bob Goheen who was there at the time, former president of Princeton, also took an interest in this.

The other interest that we had in India that tended to have negative repercussions throughout most of his time was non-proliferation. The Indians had tested in 1974. It was in large measure, in response to two or three pressing activities on them. One was the Chinese had tested earlier and they didn't see the Chinese after '62 as a friendly, gracious neighbor and so were worried about the threat.

The second is the kind of universal constant among proliferating states that we are a great country, that we have a great history., we have a long and very, very important place in the evolution of this world and we have a significant place to play in its future and all the other countries who fit in that category have nuclear weapons. So it is a kind of an idea which recognizes authority or ratifies the authority that calls such countries to be nuclear states. It is also a ratification of scientific achievement. That trend came along in India. The Indians saw it also in a partially malevolent and malicious way -- maybe those words are too strong but as a way to kind of put another foot, if you could put it in a way, on the neck of Pakistan. Not I think realizing in the early days of the 1974 explosion that India would drive the Pakistani's even more nuts than the Indians were after the Chinese tests. Because the Pakistani's saw themselves as smaller in size in a military way and therefore weaker than India even though they thought that their own martial tradition had made up in quality what they didn't have in quantity, They also felt that U.S. support in the conventional sense let them balance off the equation with India. But India would be insufferable and impossible from a Pakistani point of view if it had nuclear weapons and invaded Pakistan. So Pakistan started running, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, started down the nuclear weapons road. It took a while obviously for all of this to emerge in 1998 when the Indians conducted additional tests. It marked a great opportunity for Pakistan to ratify publicly its nuclear status -- to show equality here with India by also testing.

*Q: And Pakistan?*

PICKERING: And Pakistan followed.

*Q: Oh yeah, oh yes.*

PICKERING: So the Indian second round of testing in '98, set that off. In my short period of time, all of these pieces were on the table, all of them were in play and all of them very interesting. I found it possible early on to be well received by in part coming from the UN and maybe all that publicity that Margaret worried about was not for naught. The Indians told me, maybe to be nice, that they were flattered that somebody who had been at the UN had been chosen to come to India. Nevertheless, that helped me. I found it early on possible to be well received, to see the prime minister, to have doors opened, to see the ministers in general who were, I thought, across the board of varying quality, if I can put it that way. But certainly Manmohan Singh and Chidambaram among others were very able people and highly responsible and I thought very open and reasonably easy to deal with.

One of the things that happened to me that I thought was interesting was an opportunity I had to go, I think, near the end of my UN term, to speak at a graduation at Tulane Law School in New Orleans. When I went I was picked up at the airport by someone I presumed was a volunteer and she was one of the daughters of the old ruling family in Gwalior, the Scindias, who have an enormous role in Indian politics. Her brother was at that point minister of civil aviation in India in the Congress government. We chatted, she knew because my appointment had been announced that I was going to India and left me with some information on her family. We stayed in touch and when I arrived in India I had an invitation from her mother for lunch. Her mother was a formidable figure in the BJP, the Hindu nationalist opposition party. The lunch took place maybe within a week of my arrival in India but I had seen others so it wasn't as if I was meeting the BJP as a first event...

*Q: You weren't reaching out to an opposition party?*

PICKERING: Reaching, no the other way. I went by and met her mother who was indeed a formidable figure and her junior sister who was a member of the lower house (Lok Sabha) for the BJP. But I also had an opportunity to meet all but one of the three major leaders in the BJP. Advani and Joshi, who were tremendously important were there. As a result I was able through them to meet then another member of the lower house. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who later became prime minister. I made it a rule which I think was unusual that when I was entertaining American visitors, I would try to seek a balance. So I had some of the BJP people around with the Congress people.

It was interesting, the Indians were always civil to each other particularly at that leadership level; they all know each other. Whatever deep concerns they may have about each other they all behaved well in public. I think the BJP had not been excessively courted by the U.S., not ignored, but not excessively courted, but this helped to put in place a set of relationships which later on when I worked for Boeing and the BJP was in power and when I became undersecretary helped hold the door open.

*Q: Did the Israeli experience or were we so involved with labor that Likud had sort of fallen by the wayside? Did that play in your mind? I mean, you know...*

PICKERING: Of course it did. My experience in Israel where I dealt with the National Unity government composed half of Labor and half of Likud where I had to keep a balance was also helpful. At one point the prime minister who was, in the traditional terms in Israel in charge of the U.S. relationship, and in my early days I was much closer to Shimon Peres, that made it harder to claw my way back with Yitzhak Shamir. This too played a role in my own thinking, as it had in other places where trying to keep lines open to the opposition without upsetting the party in power was always one of the more difficult tasks for an ambassador.

*Q: Well did you have any feeling Tom of an entrenched; I won't call it bureaucracy but an entrenched way of thinking. I mean back in Washington in sort of power circles at the State Department and maybe within Congress of I mean India had not been a favorite for a long time.*

PICKERING: You are also right to raise that question because it's an important part always of the India equation. It was when I was there, it was when I was undersecretary, it was as I watched India and have watched India over the years. I think that first we could say the following. There were a certain number of people who were particularly interested in India. Often one of those might be appointed ambassador. Bob Goheen had a long relationship with India. I think actually he was born there, grew up there, went to school there as a youngster. Chester Bowles had a fascination with India and was twice Ambassador. Daniel Patrick Moynihan had also an interesting relationship with India and accepted the post. His wife was an expert on Moghul gardens and wrote a book on the subject. All of them found Indians trying at times, as I think Indians maybe find Americans trying at times. But nevertheless were there and were emotionally attached to India as well as appreciative of the importance of India. I used to say a couple of things about India. One American problem was that India was always turned to the backside of all American globes. We want to look to Europe or on the upper end wanted to look at the northern or western hemisphere and China. As a result our knowledge about India, our interest in India was quite limited and it tended to segregate the one-quarter of one-half of one percent of Americans who were interested in India from the 99.99999 percent who understood India was there, but only saw India as a mess, didn't know much about India and were not particularly interested in pursuing India.

The literary world tended to heighten American interest in India and there were a few novels and stories about India that tended to catch on from time to time., many of them enlarged a fascination with the British Raj.

*Q: And movies Gandhi and...*

PICKERING: Movies, absolutely, and some of them first rate and some of them actually awful, they ran the gamut. There were very few Americans who were at all familiar with our long history with India for example, the New England trading tradition. Up until the 1820s or '30s New England merchants and Indian merchants had a very long and very profitable relationship. I had the pleasure of celebrating in 1992 in Calcutta, their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our longest continuously established consulate. We were opened in 1792 in Calcutta and never shut. So there was this historic relationship.

There were these wonderful stories about one of the early exports from the United States to India -- it was ice. We started figuring out how to sell New England ice to the Caribbean about 1800. We insulated some ships with sawdust. Then we began to understand that maybe there was a market for this in India. We improved the insulation so that while 20 percent of the cargo was pumped out of the bottom of the ship during the passage. with two crossings of the equator, these ships arrived in Madras and Calcutta with enough ice to sell to make good money. In Madras today ( Chennai today), there is on the waterfront a huge round brick building, which was the American icehouse. It now has windows and is I am told a girls school.

*Q: Then there is ice king, I can't think of his name but a New England merchant who came up with this.*

PICKERING: Yes, sure. Well who was it that wrote poem about the waters of New England merging with the Ganges? It was essentially the ice trade, which was going on. Was it Emerson? I'm not sure.

In any event, we had this tradition that had all but disappeared. We had missionaries and they had spent a lot of time in India, but they were quite esoteric and remotely connected with small American towns and not with too much in the way of public awareness of India. Salem, Massachusetts, my family's home town so to speak, has a wonderful museum -- the Essex and Peabody -- based on the collections of captains and merchants engaged in world trade beginning in the 1750s. One set of materials are effigies of their Indian merchant partners sent to them as gifts. So we had a combination of some serious ignorance about India and a willingness to look at a world that was shaped by India -- Indo centric ideas -- both geographically and geopolitically. There was also a tendency at various times for some Americans to believe that the Indians had betrayed us and betrayed our common commitment to democracy by this close relationship with the Communists. Indian independent thinking on a lot of these issues was certainly not our cup of tea nor was Krishna Menon. So, all of this history tended to raise these tensions which continue to exist.

Nevertheless, there were beginnings of other things happening which were quite fascinating in India. Early on we were invited to Bangalore, a city that everybody knew by reputation as being a pleasant, large metropolis in south India, at a high enough altitude, not to suffer from all of the heavy heat and enjoyed by the British military as a result.

*Q: They also had a great torpedo there we used, the Bangalore Torpedo.*

PICKERING: The Bangalore Torpedo was essentially an instrument of land warfare.

*Q: Yeah, yeah, it was used \_\_\_\_\_.*

PICKERING: It was a long tube with explosives to blow up barbed wire. What was interesting was that I went down because Tata and IBM (International Business Machines) had started a partnership to create software. Bangalore already had a reputation for a number of American information technology industry partners with Indians, but also for the development of Indian domestic software and IT-related products. It was an interesting evolution because over the centuries the Hindu's had paid a lot of attention to mathematics. So mathematical skills were widely esteemed and part of Indian culture. People who were well trained in math in India found a natural adaptation of this in software production. In any event, I went down and attended this opening and it looked like quite an interesting venture. The year before I got there I think India had a \$200 million IT business. We all predicted it would grow, but nothing like the billions of dollars that it represents now. Tata and IBM stayed together for a while and then split up.

*Q: Well then how did you find...let's take the foreign ministry, how did you find that?*

PICKERING: I think this is interesting too and I was also about to talk about that. When I arrived there was no minister for external affairs and IJ worked closely with the Foreign Secretary, the civil servant, Mani Dixit, who reported directly to the Prime Minister....

*Q: This is Tape 16, Side 1, with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: we are talking about the destruction in 1992 by Hindu nationalist of a mosque built in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century in North India using only manual labor and hand tools. The Hindus believed the mosque was built on the location of a Hindu temple said to mark the birthplace of the god Ram. The action caused riots in some cities and a significant number of deaths. So far the Indian governments both in the BJP and Congress party have not permitted that site to be further disturbed by religious controversy. Those are examples and, of course, of such problems. More recently long after my time, two years ago, there was a series of very bad riots in Gujarat where first Hindu's were attacked on trains and then Muslims were attacked with high death tolls on both sides. This was typical of what had gone on particularly in places in India, in colonial India, where inter-religious violence and strife had broken out and had gotten out of control and large-scale killings took place almost always of totally innocent people. In Gujarat, the Chief Minister, Narasimha Modi was accused of ignoring his responsibility for law and order especially when Muslims were the victims. (He was elected Prime Minister in 2014)..

*Q: Did we have as the ambassador there, how were we evaluating the Hindu National movement as far as being I can only think of akin to something like the Nazi's or something like this.*

PICKERING: Well they had wings of the party that were militant and organized and one might say had some characteristics of fascist movements -the RSS it was called. But other pieces of the party were reasonable. They were coming out of an opposition movement to the Congress party of long standing. Parties like the Janata Dal had real aspirations to run India, they had a tilt obviously toward their right-wing fellows, but they were not subsumed in it. I kept open the lines to them because I felt that as the American ambassador it was not our place to choose sides. It was certainly our place to criticize excesses when we felt that things had gotten out of hand particularly if it impacted negatively our interests. It was also our role as a friendly foreign state to understand where Indian politics was going and to develop relationships with individuals who while they were not then engaged in positions of power might under the Indian electoral system become leaders -- as some they later did.

Keeping doors open is important and there was no reason in my view, despite the excesses of the extreme wing of the party, to anathematize the party as a whole. Later on when the BJP came to power, certainly after I left, the relationships between the United States and the BJP were normal and reasonable.

After I retired from government, I went back to India frequently on a commercial business and saw leaders of the BJP and they were reasonable to deal with. In part the contest in India over the last decade has become a serious one between a traditional, long-standing parties, the Congress and the BJP, which with the growth of new parties were going to have to form collations in order to run the country. Often these coalitions would involve as many as ten parties. Indian politics had moved from the immediate post-independence period where the party that brought independence was almost unshakeable to a much more diverse and splintered political system. The new parties were often regional, representing language and regions across the country or

also representative of groups such as the untouchables who felt it necessary to form their own party to exercise any political influence.

*Q: The Congress Party?*

PICKERING: The issue of economic reform was an important point of interest, and support for it in the Congress Party began to show the start of change. Economic reform was not totally endorsed throughout the whole party, but certainly the present prime minister who was finance minister when I was there, Manmohan Singh, was very vigorous in leading change. He sought to open up the economy, provide real opportunities for more foreign investment, and reduce bureaucratic impediments to change. He worked to reduce what I would call the power of the bureaucracy in trying to manage and operate the economy and get under control issues like corruption. The prevalence of the government in the economic realm meant in fact that a good bit of what people in India had to do to start firms and to move them ahead was in effect to buy off the civil servants who were standing the way. They controlled licenses to gain all the necessary permissions to operate.

*Q: There is nothing like going in to an Indian run office and seeing all of these documents piled high on the desk.*

PICKERING: Absolutely, lots of documents and, of course, over those years mainly under Congress Party government, but not exclusively so, the bureaucracy grew. It was partly a make work scheme, partly a political support mechanism, but because civil servants were so poorly paid, it evolved into something called the 'License Raj'. In effect you had to pay to get the license to do the things that you wanted to do and there were large numbers of licenses required. When I was there someone, I don't know how reliably, calculated that it required 90 signatures to start operating a new firm in India. All of those in one way or another involved dealing with civil servants, including meeting their need for extra income. It was clearly acknowledged that it was a problem certainly by the foreign investment sector and by many Indians who wanted to change. It's not something that's changed very easily and I don't believe in fact that it was something invented since independence. Under British colonial administration the effort was made by the British to try to get it cleaned up, but it did not stay cleaned up and it was a long-standing tradition in India that you crossed the palms of government officials to get what you needed.

*Q: It was something I ran across in Vietnam where essentially you were paying for services. I mean the civil service essentially weren't paid and so if you wanted I mean if you...*

PICKERING: If you wanted to get their help you paid their salary.

*Q: In a rough way it makes sense.*

PICKERING: Yes, well, it's fee for service except obviously it goes into people's pockets right away rather than through the accounting and control system of the government into the treasury.

*Q: While you were there were you seeing cracks in the old bureaucratic system? India has now moved considerably but...*

PICKERING: What I saw were not huge cracks I saw the beginning of a serious look at change and reform and in opening things up led through the ministry of finance, which was very powerful. That was having some effect particularly on the rules and regulations concerning investment and some on taxation. The idea of reform was gathering steam and that it was endorsed by Prime Minister Rao and mainly carried out by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh and a small group of people around him who were instrumental -- then Minister of Commerce Chidambaram who happens to be finance minister now. The finance ministry top civil servants, the finance secretary, was also a Sikh, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who happens to be now running the Indian planning board, were among the key leaders of the reform movement. It was a sign of hope.

We saw interestingly enough in the operation the development of IT industry, the information technology industry, an opening up of a new industry without much government intervention.. There are two theories about why the information technology industry ran ahead without a lot of government control. One theory was that since it was so new that there was no in-play set of regulations and no organized ministry to deal with it.

*Q: You weren't breaking any rice bowls particularly.*

PICKERING: You were or you weren't trying to intrude in areas that were already tightly governed, we could put it that way.

To some extent I think that was true. To another extent certainly people very close to Rajiv Gandhi who was there at the beginning say that it was also a government decision to let it go. That Rajiv saw the value and opportunity there and saw what Indian's might be able to do with their strength in mathematics and their ability to work in programs, software and things of that sort. So I think the answer was there was a combination of both. It could be the prime minister and maybe even members of cabinet held back on trying to reach out and grab pieces of it and keep the government bureaucrats and others on a leash, and to some extent the industry developed so rapidly that in effect it stayed ahead of any governmental effort to catch up and control it.

*Q: Well I think we've both been through this of watching our colleagues of a certain generation have never quite cotton to even using the computer as a typing tool.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: The younger people below them there was a whole generation who was in charge who probably didn't realize all the ramifications that...*

PICKERING: No, no I think it's right; we see that even today in places like the State Department there is a real opportunity for young people who know and understand the potential of the technology and the new communications to help others understand where it can go and how far it

can be taken. In fact, I spent yesterday over in the Department on a small panel the secretary has on transformation of diplomacy. We've got two or three really sensationally good leaders in the IT industry. Their suggestion was from their past experience that you really ought to build a youth corps, that the ambassadors and the Department ought to turn to the under-35 year olds and put them together and say, "OK, here we are moving ahead now, but what are your suggestions for how we can get the best use out of this, where are the real opportunities, how can we move with those and what are your ideas?" I think that's a tremendously interesting opportunity and to some extent that was sort of the role in India of the Indian IT gurus, if I can put it that way, vis-à-vis the Indian government.

*Q: Well getting into something that looks somewhat ahead to where you ended up with Boeing. What was the airline business? The Indians weren't producing airplanes, was that a big deal or not for America?*

PICKERING: India didn't have a strong interest or capacity to produce commercial airplanes. The Indians were engaged in developing a light combat aircraft, a military aircraft. When I was there we were able to get the U.S. to license technology to India in the form of I think a dozen GE (General Electric) engines for this airplane. That airplane has now been under development for almost twenty years. Very few copies have been built and most of them are flying with the dozen engines or so that we helped to put in.

The Indians had real interests areas of high technology. They were beginning to develop some helicopters, some of that has been quite successful. I think light combat aircraft was basically the development of a 1960s type jet, fighter plane, in the 1980s with a very, very long lead time to bring anything to fruition and it's not in mass production.

The interesting thesis is that the Indian's were for many years heavily dependent on Soviet jets, particularly the MIG-21. The MIG-21 is a chancy airplane and the Indians have lost a lot of airplanes and a lot of people as a result of the challenges of flying the airplane. As a result in their military procurement they went where they could, to the French, for more reliable high-tech airplanes, looking at the British to. But the Indians right now are engaged in what might be the last really large order of jet fighters in the world. They are looking at 126 airplanes and, of course, they are opening up including not only to Russia and Europe but also to the United States. The Indians maintain, I think, the fourth largest air force in the world. They will want to build themselves a hundred of those planes.

The Indians and the United States throughout the bad times as well as the good over the decades since Indian independence but particularly in the '50s began to develop very close relationships in science and technology. One of my first opportunities to work with Indians in the Foreign Service was when I became assistant secretary for oceans, environment and science. We worked on science cooperation with real scientists who were experts in their areas and they worked in India. We had worked over the years with the Indians in joint research in medical science, and in agriculture which was particularly important. I think the U.S. agriculture science community, figures like Norman Borlaug in particular, played a huge role in India's ability in the '60s and the '70s to develop essentially food self-sufficiently and a food export capability. The development of new strains of rice and other basic crops that were well suited to the Indian scene and



multiplied their output were at the center of the effort. At the same time, that the Indian government deserves serious credit for the construction of a very strong system of food storage system so that it was able to avoid what had been the plague of the British administration, frequent famine. There were parts of India that were really devastated in the past that are all now free of the problem.

*Q: This, of course, you having picked up when I don't know how it was when you were in Russia but apparently a third of the Soviet crop would go spoil in storage or something like that.*

PICKERING: Yes, even more when I was there we used to figure that post harvest food losses in Russia were between twenty and thirty percent. A significant part of that is that there was no organized marketing mechanism. The government agency had to pick up the food from the collectives and state farms and was very inefficient. The rail transportation system was not organized around this so there was a good deal of spoilage even before it got to the storage depot.

*Q: Turning to the other aspect, the external aspect of India, while you were let's take a peak at the neighbors.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Pakistan you really already dealt with but what about China? Well let's take China first.*

PICKERING: Well I think China was sort of still the ghost at the picnic and it hung over I think a lot of Indian calculations. China was, I think, at one and the same time for India both the stimulus and the excuse for developing a nuclear weapons capability. India conducted its first test in '74 as a 'peaceful experiment' and then continued to keep alive and hone its nuclear capacity including its ability to produce nuclear explosives. Of course, at the same time that it went into nuclear explosives, it also went into the development of various reactors around India for the production of electrical power. They were linked -- the military and civil programs -- to a great extent. The Indians put a lot of effort in this direction; they weren't too efficient at it. They had real trouble finding an effective way to enrich uranium. They relied on heavy water type reactors which had the capability of producing serious, military plutonium in the spent fuel. That would form the nucleus of their military program, as well as provide a difficult problem for the Indians to deal with when the fuel had to be removed from the reactors and stored and separated. They mastered the ability to reprocess to separate the plutonium from spent fuel. They had some reactors, including a Canadian heavy water reactor bought originally for experimental purposes, which was obviously diverted in the early stages to produce plutonium for their weapons program and for the first device they tested in 1974.

We were concerned and spent a lot of time with the Indians seeking to get them to back off their military efforts to develop weapons. The other reasons for which I had gone to India before I became ambassador there were visits on non-proliferations -- to try and persuade the Indians that their weapons program made no sense and that they should abandon it. It was expensive. If they would set it aside, there could be further cooperation to move civil programs ahead. Of course, as you know, roughly about the time that the Indians acquired the Canadian reactor shortly

thereafter they acquired several U.S. reactors at a place called Tarapur, north of Bombay on the coast, for the production of electrical power. And as the Indians had their test and all the other things that went on, the Congress reacted and very strict legislation was introduced. It established that until India was prepared to put its entire program under international safeguards against its use for military purposes, which quickly became U.S. policy, we were no longer prepared to provide fuel for the Tarapur plant. They did get fuel from the French because the French had not adopted the 'full scope safeguards regime'. After the French did then the problem of fuel for Tarapur came back. They ended up with having the Chinese to provide fuel for this reactor, but it was a long-standing and continuing problem between the U.S. and India.

We suspected, but we had no basis for proving it and I don't know whether it really ever happened, the Indians claimed it never did, that the plutonium produced in the spent fuel from the Tarapur reactor may have been involved in the military program. I don't think that was the case, but I think there was definitely, put it this way, a serious misuse of the Canadian reactor. The Canadians were not happy obviously because they were pioneers in heavy water technology, even though it tended to have a bigger capacity to reproduce plutonium which could be used for military purposes after chemical separation from the spent fuel. We were concerned about that.

Aside from the nuclear program and all the neuralgia over that, the long-standing continuation of U.S.-Indian science and technology cooperation was a mainstay of the relationship, at the time I was there too. We had a small assistance program, but a quite effective one, operating in a number of areas. They were clearly related to Indian economic development. A good bit of it was run off rupee balances which had accumulated in very large amounts. When Ambassador Moynihan was there large amounts were returned to the Indian government in the belief we would never be able to make use of those rupees.. The remainder however was running down. We had begun to feel something of the pinch because some of those rupee balances which we used for our assistance program paid for a lot of Indians to come to the United States to study. We were seeing that dry up as were the Indians. There was a lot of obvious unhappiness on both sides particularly in the science community about the inability to continue these student exchange programs. Large numbers of them funded by the fact that over the years we provided India with food and other things that helped them and they gave us the rupees in return after the sale of the food to use to continue the assistance program.

*Q: Did the Indians...you were coming from the United Nations, did the Indians raise the fact that they were a huge country and sophisticated and al, they weren't on the Security Council...*

PICKERING: India had not really begun to gather momentum on Security Council membership when I was there. It was interesting that the United States had taken a view, in the Bush administration, that it could accept a very small increase in the number of members of the Security Council. The Bush administration had supported, first Japan and then also Germany as potential add-on members to the Security Council. But it was clear to me at the UN that was going nowhere. The addition of further permanent members was not what the group of 77 -- the non-aligned -- really had in mind. After I left there was a kind of different consensus built across a lot of the UN members about an approach to the enlargement of the Security Council. It never actually gained a large significant amount of momentum and at various times we took the view that twenty or twenty-one was as large as the Security Council actually should be expanded.

Dick Holbrooke when he was in New York got acceptance in Washington to go to twenty-two or so. Dick needed that as extra leverage to resolve the problem of a deal on our outstanding U.S. arrearages. He needed to get a reduction or a lower cap on the size of our regular assessment as part of the process of bringing the Congress along with covering the arrearages. But, I think that's as far as it has gone. The point then heated up and India was very much interested. The Bush administration had what I would call made positive noises about India coming on at the moment obviously. (Since then the US has supported Indian membership on the Security Council 2015)

*Q: We are talking about the present Bush administration?*

PICKERING: Present Bush (43) administration. It was not an issue for the first Bush administration. As I recall I don't think I had any serious pressures or conversations about it. I could stand corrected. I don't remember this as a big question. I didn't think it was going anywhere fast in any event and maybe that was what the Indians thought.

*Q: Burma, how...*

PICKERING: Indians didn't like the notion they were not on the council and the Chinese were obviously there.

*Q: Yeah, and when you think about it Germany, particularly Germany, seems to be kind of farther away from...I mean you are looking at sort of mass power and influence in a particular area.*

PICKERING: Well India is a large continental country with a big populations obviously still developing. The Chinese issue with India was aggravated by the continued differences over the border talks on which were going on. The foreign secretary met with the Chinese on a couple of occasions and while it was clear that no big break-through was expected, it was also clear that there was enough happening in the discussion area that there would not be shooting across the frontier.

*Q: Nobody was stirring up the Tibet business at that time?*

PICKERING: No, by then Tibet had become pretty much a settled issue. While the Dalai Lama was in Darjeeling some of the time, the Tibetans would come by and see me and obviously state their case. We were not unsympathetic at all, but it had not moved to the point where anybody was actively engaged either forcibly or otherwise in trying to separate Tibet from China except the remnants of those who had come out at the time of or as a result of the Chinese control.

*Q: Now Burma, it was right on the border and under a very severe dictatorship. During your time how did that...did India pay much attention to it?*

PICKERING: India tried to develop a stable relationship with the Burmese. That India had, as you know, serious insurgency problems in eastern India among tribal people in Assam and the other small states of eastern India, not all of them but some which border on Burma, That was a

factor. Some of the insurgents were Christianized tribal people, but not entirely. This was always going on, it was always a problem and almost weekly, certainly monthly, you would have something in the press, reports of some serious problem. People were being killed. India was never able to bring it under control entirely and there were often negotiations going on. So that in effect you had all of this standing geographically between India and Burma. It tended to catch the headlines and the Indians had no interest in having the Burmese involved in any way at all. They treated the Burmese as neighbors, in part as a segment of a sphere of influence. They were not interested in dominating in a direct sense and certainly they wanted no difficulties with Burma. In the colonial period many Indians lived and worked in Burma as shopkeepers and more. Some became very wealthy. Their role and position had created unhappiness in Burma and after Burmese independence the Indians were pushed out. The Burmese did not in general have fond memories of the Indians.

What India was also concerned about was increasingly close relations between the Burmese and China. There were many rumors about the Chinese having set up a naval base there -- naval bases on the Indian Ocean in southern Burma or on islands that belonged to Burma north of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The latter were Indian possessions in the Indian Ocean, located about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way maybe to Sumatra from India. They were concerned about these reports. The islands were sensitive areas for India over a long period of time, partly because the Indians still used those for penal colonies, partly because the native population was fragile and to some extent a little bit unhappy and restive, and to some extent they wanted in a very effective way to keep all non-Indians out of that area and carefully control the Indians who went back and forth. It was a difficult place to visit and they didn't want Chinese submarines, naval vessels and aircraft operating freely and frequently in that area from Burmese territory. Those reports tended to be more exaggerated than they were real. I certainly kept checking on them when I was there with our intelligence establishment. We never turned up anything as I recall.

*Q: Did you sort of share, in some ways...*

PICKERING: I said to the Indians that we had looked at it and hadn't seen anything. Yes.

*Q: What about Sri Lanka? What was during that time?*

PICKERING: The Tamils in the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and the Sinhala people were still fighting while I was there. The Indians had been very badly burned by their earlier intervention and then ultimately withdrawal of their peace keeping force. Some of the blow back was real, because there was no question at all that Tamils had been involved in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. I think all together when I was there the Indians watched it with interest, but did so from the point of view that it was not wise or important for them to engage. The man who was the Indian foreign secretary when I was there had been high commissioner in Sri Lanka (Commonwealth ambassador title,) and had been intimately involved in Sri Lanka and the intervention. He, at least to me, indicated there was no appetite in India for recreating that activity.

*Q: Well what about then the various international organizations focused around that part of the world? Did we get involved...you mentioned one...?*

PICKERING: Well SAARC (South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation) was a creation of the sub continentals themselves. It had begun having meetings. It was primary thought of as an opportunity for economic coordination, but it provided an unusual opening, particularly in times of tension for the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers to have side talks. They were generally seen as useful in providing that kind of venue. It could lead to opportunities either to calm a situation and occasionally for opening up a new round of discussions. The Indians were with the Pakistani's in a regular search when I was there for a diplomatic formula under which to conduct bilateral discussions of outstanding issues.

The central issue was that the Pakistani's wanted Kashmir as number one and wanted references, where they could get them, to past UN resolutions that tilted the potential solution in their direction. The Indians said they were happy to talk about everything but they wanted to talk about everything. They did not want it tilted toward Kashmir and did not want what the Pakistanis wanted was the opportunity for external intervention. The Pakistani's tended to think that the rest of the world would support them on this issue through its interest in self-determination and the history of UN resolutions. The Indians did not want to have the rest of the world lined up against them on this and so they insisted that these talks be exclusively bi-lateral with Pakistan. We began to develop a notion that I think later had helped sway the discussions, that while it was always dangerous with the Indians to give them the view that we were prepared to intervene on Kashmir we also could not totally abandon interest in the problem.. As our relationship built it became, if I could put it this way, at least a semi-legitimate subject on which to speak to them from the Indians perspective. That later developed much more firmly in the Clinton administration which had made a major effort to reach out to India and certainly in the Bush administration.

But while we could see the beginnings of a potential formula where we would not play a major role as a facilitator, we could be part of an international consortium as much as that might seem attractive in getting this problem resolved. What one could call a friend to both parties, speaking to them bilaterally but not attempting in a major way to do much more than proposing or suggesting this was an important issue, that talks should go ahead, that we would encourage both sides to talk and we would listen.

*Q: Did you see in this and other aspects of breaking up or maybe it had happened some time before of what I understood has been one of the major problems between India and the United States, we tend to preach to each other and we both sort of pontificate and we get on each others nerves?*

PICKERING: That is a very good question Stuart and I think that without basically saying it had become part of U.S. policy it had become very clear and self evident to us that particularly finger wagging had almost no utility. The Indians, at least on the official level, tended to lay off on their side, it wasn't possible always to get every non-official Indian not to be critical of some aspect of U.S. policy, more past than present when I was there and there were people in the United States also interested. The really interesting thing was that there was a small coterie of people in the United States who followed India closely, who understood this and there were a lot larger group of people in India who followed the United States closely who were only beginning to get it. So

we had a little bit of one-sidedness on this issue. But I think President Bush overall knew and understood the importance of India in this world. It seemed a lot of the past mistakes and the difficulties and scratchiness with the Indians should and could be avoided. At the same time India was not as I kept saying to folks on the front side of all American globes.

*Q: No it's not, it is always there but I imagine particularly a place like Bush I at the United Nations I mean you get a full exposure to India.*

PICKERING: When I was there I worked very closely with the Indians. India was a member of the Security Council; the Indian permrep and I were good friends. He generally followed a fairly careful course, was not disruptive, occasionally came in with ideas or questions and that represented in many cases improvements or certainly things that we could accept without disadvantage in various resolutions. I didn't feel that we had a Krishna Menon our hands by any means or a Krishna Menon type situation where India was seeking through its ability to become an attack dog against the United States or a creator of road blocks, to achieve notoriety or admirations among the non-aligned or otherwise.

*Q: You and I are of a generation we say Krishna Menon, we think of the evil influence there. Can you explain what you mean by Krishna Menon?*

PICKERING: Well Krishna Menon was an Indian political figure and diplomat and at one point representative in the United Nations. He was also, I think, Indian defense minister who became particularly known...

*Q: This was during the '40s and '50s wasn't it?*

PICKERING: 40s, it wasn't '50s for his salient criticism of the United States. I had the opportunity to meet him in it must have been the late '50s or early '60s in Geneva. Some of my colleagues who had actually worked with him in the UN had formed a kind of affection for him. This was not something where the professionals who dealt with each other necessarily thought that he was the fountain of all evil.

On the other hand, he had gained that reputation and, of course, this was all heightened by Cold War, for confrontation. He was seen, obviously because he was attacking us, as being a Soviet shill and to some extent he sympathized with some of the ideological predispositions of the Soviets. He was certainly a convinced Indian socialist. He was a very adept speaker and able to use his speaking talents in a very effective way to build votes against us.

But I also remember that Ron Spiers with whom I worked and who had worked in the UN at the time and had actually found some opportunities to put positive things together with Krishna Menon behind the scenes. It was through Ron that I actually had the opportunity to join him in a meeting with Krishna Menon in Geneva when I was working there. While there was nothing substantive about the meeting, it was an interesting to observe him and his working style. Even at the time that I was there in Geneva, Arthur Rao was a very, very capable Indian representative, we worked very closely together on disarmament issues. A man by the name of Trivedi preceded him so there was not in that way any kind of a total confrontation with India.

*Q: Were you feeling any tremors or influence coming from the Indian community in the United States, which was growing?*

PICKERING: Just beginning, the Indian caucus was just started by a guy by the name of Frank Pallone from New Jersey and he's still in the Congress. I went to several sessions here in the States that I was invited to by the Indian community with the Indian caucus. They were beginning to build the caucus in the House. There were different organizations among Indian-Americans, there was no kind of unified, absolutely synchronized operation. I was beginning to feel that these people would become quite successful in the U.S. They were picking up interest and a willingness show their capability. Only now does one see their strength coming up.

*Q: OK, well this is a good point to break off; I think we are about at the end. One further question on India and I will ask this briefly. Was there any concern although it was not in our country, the Canadians Sikh community which had caused problems?*

PICKERING: No I think that was in part coming out of the Punjab Sikh problem and Sikh unhappiness with the way they were being treated by India. A lot of which now seems to have gone away. There is a very large community in Canada and so they've become the center of Sikh, I would call it, opposition.

*Q: OK, the next time we will pick this up when you are...*

PICKERING: I mean I think people were concerned about airplane bombings and things like that.

*Q: We will pick this up next time when you are ripped untimely from your womb in New Delhi and where, in '93, did you go?*

PICKERING: One or two words about the Indian Foreign Ministry which we had started on but never completed. Narasimha Rao was his own Foreign Minister. He had a parliamentary ministry as deputy from a coalition party who had not much to do with real policy. The major force was the Foreign Secretary, Mani Dixit. Mani was easy to work with, cooperative and wise. He had deep experience in the region and I found him an engaging and helpful colleague. Together we worked out some ideas on how India could continue to use the Tarapur reactors without US or French fuel on the basis that nit would not be diverted to military uses. That later involved the Chinese providing support.

I also found N.N. Vohra, the Defense Secretary, an able and effective interlocutor. He had played a major role in the past in seeking resolution with Pakistan over differences regarding both the Siachen Glacier and other border issues. Siachen is located at 22,000 feet in the disputed border region in northern Kashmir and probably has taken more lives as a result of the punishing weather from military members on both sides than any military action. He noted that in the past the two sides had come close together on solutions, but were at the last moment divided by domestic concerns on one side or the other and as a result failed to crystallize agreement.

*Q: Russia, OK we'll go into the story of how that happened.*

PICKERING: Out of the frying pan into the ice.

*Q: One further thing Tom. You sort of bounced around various parts of the geographic both the department and overseas. I wonder can you tell me how you view sort of the what do they call them the South Asian establishment both from what you were getting from Washington but particularly from within India. How did you view this particular area of expertise, was it different from other places or not?*

*Today is the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2007, Tom?*

PICKERING: Stu let me go ahead. I think that you wanted me to address the expertise in the South Asian bureau. Of course it wasn't the South Asia bureau when I was there, it was NEA (Near East Asia) and to some extent that's an interesting story. It was Steve Solarz in the Congress who wanted more attention on India. He had close relations with India over a long period of time and it stemmed from his own personal interest there among other things that he thought it would be...

*Q: He was Congressman from New York.*

PICKERING: From Brooklyn. I believe he thought that by setting up a separate bureau of South Asian affairs there would be more attention focused on it, having its own assistant secretary and its own hierarchy outside of the Near Eastern bureau. That bureau tended to be heavily focused in those days as it is today on the Arab-Israeli issue and now, of course, on Iraq and Iran. Iran was also a preoccupation of the Near Eastern bureau.

I found working in the Near Eastern bureau that it's true South Asia didn't command a huge amount of time from the assistant secretary. But the assistant secretary was available and certainly for major South Asian issues wanted to know what was going on and play a major role in the policy and the execution as he should have under those circumstances.

The second point is that I found a number of people in the bureau had solid South Asian language training and area experience. I was particularly lucky to have as my deputy, Ken Brill, who had both language training and prior experience in India and had been DCM for my predecessor. He was Charge for about a year I guess after I left. So that was very, very useful. I had others in the bureau and in the embassy who also had language and area training and had served in prior posts in the region. That brought a lot of their expertise to bear. I was in a sense an outsider although I had spent some time dealing with Indian issues, like non-proliferation and science questions. So it was enormously helpful to have people who had a good sense of where the bodies were buried and where and how the issues had arisen and to rely on them at least for the briefings and counsel.

*Q: You were saying that you found the expertise helpful. What about did you sense that they were kind of happy to have you because you are obviously one of the major figures in the Foreign*



*Service coming over to them when you came? Did you ever feel that they were kind of neglected or pushed to one side or not when you arrived?*

PICKERING: Not a lot. They had had Bill Clarke who had also been assistant secretary and came back to being assistant secretary in the East Asian bureau. My feeling was they were very welcoming. I think they were very comfortable with the idea of having a professional there; they frequently had had non-professionals. But a lot of those were very well chosen good people so I didn't see that necessarily as a handicap. I thought they were hopeful that I would play a role with Washington which I was fully planning to do, on issues of importance to India. I was hopeful that I could do a couple of things including support the opportunity for a new opening with India which was just barely beginning. I wanted to support Indian efforts particularly in the economic arena. I wanted to look at the problems to see if there was anything that the United States could usefully do in encouraging the Indians to get on with dealing with some of their long standing issues with Pakistan, like Kashmir, and some of the more minor ones, Siachen Glacier and Wullar Barrage and Sir Creek where they had border disputes or disputes over important issues between over things like access to water.

*Q: OK well let's come back to that.*

PICKERING: Let me just say a couple things. I think the notion of creating a separate bureau had lots of pros and cons. My view is that the smaller the bureau the less time and attention the assistant secretary gets from the secretary because the range of issues is smaller. That assessment not hold up in terms of where the State Department has dealt with these issues for some time. We will get to it when we talk about my under secretary period.

I have long argued that we should go back to a five-bureau structure for the regions and something comparable for the functional bureaus. As you know, we have in general support bureaus in the State Department like the Legal Advisers office and INR and we have management and administrative bureaus but a rule of five for each of those would reduce something like 40+ now assistant secretary level officials to something closer to 20 reporting to the Secretary. That would make sense even in a ramified bureaucracy like the State Department. In my view the State Department has numerous problems of how to deal with functional issues and regional issues with functional dynamics and functional issues with regional dynamics all at one time. It's obviously going to be a matrixed organization. We are not going to let one point of view solve all problems, but the fewer people we have in the room representing the diversity the more likely we are to get white smoke out of the chimney rather than black soot.

*Q: If they could settle it in the family? Before it turns into...*

PICKERING: Yes. They should be able to settle policy issues in the main at a reasonably low level. That is another reorganizational issue I'll talk about because I felt that the under secretaries by 1996 had become much too stove piped. Too many issues were being dealt with them within a cluster of bureaus that they considered reported to them and not across the Department. My view was always the under secretary role should be as a surrogate for the secretary not a replacement. I the under secretary by dealing with all the bureaus interested in a problem could solve the problem for the State Department that would take a lot of weight off the secretary, That meant

having in the room people not only who were in the “cluster” of the under secretary’s bureaus, but people from all the bureaus interested and relevant. That was the way to get at the answer on behalf of the secretary and it made sense. But we will talk more about that, that philosophy of organization later on.

*Q: Well, let’s talk about your...you sound like a man who couldn’t hold his job all of a sudden.*

PICKERING: You are exactly right.

*Q: Anyway, what happened?*

PICKERING: It has all the appearances of that. What happened I guess was that the State Department had begun a search for a new ambassador to Russia under conditions of change, Yeltsin had come in. Bob Strauss had gone out just at the time of Yeltsin’s standing on the tank on the barricades in August 1991 and supported Yeltsin. Bob had been there a year and decided that with the Clinton administration, the Clinton administration should go find a new ambassador. The Clinton administration, according to the historical reports to which I had later access looked around at a few people. They couldn’t find willing volunteer from among the pre-eminent and widely noted. So as usually it dipped down into the Foreign Service and somehow yours truly’s name came to their attention.

I had an interesting experience over this because in December after the election I was called to Little Rock to interview with president-elect Clinton for another job. That happened to have been the intelligence job. We had a very nice interview and a good discussion, I came out very pleased with the results. I got on a plane and stopped over in Frankfurt. I got a call from Warren Christopher who had been handling personnel and Warren informed me at the Frankfurt airport that the job had gone to somebody else, which was obviously something that was disappointing to me but never the less...

*Q: This was what job?*

PICKERING: A CIA job.

*Q: CIA job.*

PICKERING: So I went back to India, but Christopher had said that they certainly had things in mind for me. So along about, it must have been mid-January or so, I had a call at three o’clock in the morning from Peter Tarnoff who was under secretary at the time. Peter said in a kind of cryptic way in the middle of the night and I was half awake, “We would like to have you go to FSU (Former Soviet Union). I said, “Well Peter, why would you want to send me to be a diplomat in residence to Florida State University. Are you really unhappy with the job I’ve done here or do you have somebody who you think is going to do a better job in India?”

*Q: You are thinking Florida State University.*

PICKERING: Florida State University, yes. I said, "I don't have any real interest in going to Florida, maybe I can have my choice." So he said, "No, no, no I was being cute and it's the former Soviet Union." It was Russia, so I said, "Well, obviously this is something I would like to do, it will not be easy here because they had just been four months without an ambassador before I came, or five months without an ambassador and they will be unhappy. They will want to know if somebody is coming to take my place and if so who and all the rest of it." He said, "Well I can't tell you the answer to all of that because that hasn't been decided yet. But at an appropriate time in a few weeks we'll be announcing this." I said, "Well I've got to have at least twenty-four hours advance notice so I can tell the prime minister here what's going on and explain what's happened." So he said, "Well in the meantime you'll have to sit on it," which is the usual thing and I said, "OK." I said, "I will consult my better half and let you know my final decision in a few hours." So I did that. Alice wasn't particularly happy about getting up and moving. We were living in unusual quarters so to speak because the embassy residence was under reconstruction. We were living in a very nice bungalow in New Delhi that had been the economic counselor's house. We were getting along fairly well but we literally had just hung all the pictures.

So this came about by the end of March. It was interesting that the time at which I was to talk to the Indian prime minister, it turned out to be the night that John Major, then British prime minister, was visiting. I was invited by my colleague the British high commissioner in New Delhi, the British ambassador in effect, to dinner. I knew there would be a lot of people at the dinner including a lot of Indians and I was quite surprised by that. I had called Prime Minister Rao before the dinner, he was at the dinner and I again apologized to him in person at the dinner for the change, but it was extremely interesting because my British colleague who for no reason of diplomatic precedence or otherwise sat me at John Major's left hand and the Indian prime minister at his right hand. We had a kind of conversation about this and Russia. John Major who had brought along Sir Rodric Braithwaite who had been his last ambassador in Moscow and who was his foreign policy advisor insisted that Rod Braithwaite and I have a drink an hour or so after the dinner was over. So I had an immediate briefing. Rod was tremendously knowledgeable about Russia. He has now become an old friend and has recently written two important books on Russia. I started my briefing in India at the hands of Prime Minister Major with this completely kind of serendipitous activity on things.

Later on after that all happened, Yeltsin visited India so I had a chance to go to the Indian parliament and hear Yeltsin perform at some distance.

*Q: Well how did the prime minister and eventually the Indian press, I would think that they would take a certain amount of umbrage at this.*

PICKERING: Well they were respectful. I said that, of course, if I had my personal choice, which was true, I would have preferred to stay in India. I had only been there eight months and had just begun the job. They were complimentary about the work that I had done and said they regretted my leaving, but they understood that governments make choices in these things and they also understood the importance of Russia to the future of the United States and they didn't minimize that. So they wished me well. Well, I think I had some expressions of disappointment in the local press for the usual reasons. But they were complimentary reasons rather than reasons of unhappiness. Unfortunately, I think it took a whole year for Frank Wisner to be nominated and

get out as my successor and that cannot have sat well as I had anticipated. Frank was a superb Ambassador; he was there three and a half years, so he kind of mended the breach and in his usual fashion did a great job in India. For that reason, I believe my short stay did not leave any kind of long festering problem in India.

I've always been welcomed back in India since, and people have been very, very kind. We made a lot of personal friends in India so we've been able to keep up. It was for me a very unusual tour because the minimum in the past for me had been a couple of years. This revolving door business obviously didn't help the Indians understand where things were going, but what happened under Frank and then later on under Dick Celeste and the whole Clinton-Indian relationship had shifted the focus. President Clinton paid a very successful visit to India. Those two ambassadors and the State Department and the White House moved the process of dealing with India way ahead. Of course, President Clinton played a very personal role in the resolution of the Kargil issue when Nawaz Sharif came to Washington. We can talk about that later on. When I became under secretary I had an opportunity to go out to India start a dialogue at the level of Indian foreign secretary which I also helped to put things, so far as there was any kind of personal issue there, back on track.

*Q: Why do you think it took so long for Wisner to..?*

PICKERING: You'll have to talk to Frank about that. I was in Russia worrying about a lot of other things.

*Q: Southeast Asia.*

PICKERING: The usual problem that administrations have in finding people to go as ambassador to certain places. Frank had been under secretary of Defense for policy and moved over maybe he did it the other way and became the under secretary for security affairs at the State Department. I suspect that they didn't want to lift Frank out right away because he was doing an important job.

*Q: OK, you've come back to Washington. What was your impression of...I mean this is all quite new for us. What was the date of this when you came back to Washington?*

PICKERING: I came back from India at the end of March 1993. I headed for Moscow in May. I was there around the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. Clinton had just come into office in January and Yeltsin, of course, had been in place for a couple of years in Russia. But this had been one of our most important and difficult, tense, strained and significant relationships -- so it was a high priority. The president had asked Strobe Talbot to come in to cover Russia. Strobe was an old friend and roommate of the president's at Oxford. They had been together for a long time and talked a lot. Strobe in effect became Mr. Russia for the State Department. Warren Christopher had brought him into the State Department. He became special assistant to the secretary and ambassador at large for the area of the former Soviet Union. This piece of what had been in the European bureau when I came in was in the course of being established as Strobe's virtual bureau for dealing with the former Soviet Union. It included not only Russia, but the other former republics of the Soviet Union, absent interestingly enough the Baltic States which went to EUR right away

and stayed with EUR. It got the initials S/NIS which stood for the Secretary's office dealing with the newly independent states.

*Q: Well what was sort of the attitude that you were finding within the Department? The greater European bureau and then this was split off, did you find that there were bureaucratic problems or disconnects or anything like that?*

PICKERING: No, not so much because in effect the staffs, which had been dealing with these countries were now sitting in the same place, but constituted this new organization. The administration and management stayed with EUR. Strobe was in effect operating as the regional assistant secretary on the policy issues, but his own broad contacts with the administration and his own background both as a journalist and in politics and with Clinton meant in fact that he was very much at ease working with Tony Lake at the White House. Tony was then the National security advisor with Sandy Berger as, his deputy. Nick Burns was over at the White House about that time dealing with Soviet affairs. Toby Gati went over there for a while and then later came over as head of NIR at State.

The group was quite tight knit; they had pretty much a broad gauged view. Jim Collins who was holding the fort as the embassy's DCM and charge when I arrived, stayed with me until roughly from May till October. Then Strobe asked him to come back, which was very much his preference, to become Stroke's deputy on NIS affairs. I worked very easily with both Jim and Strobe from Moscow at that time. I learned a lot from Jim in particular while we were together. Then I got Dick Miles who was ambassador in Azerbaijan to come up and take over the DCM job. Dick had had long experience in Russia and had the language. He had been part of the Soviet-Russia crew for a long period of time. I thought that was essential for continuity to make sure in fact that we got the best of his expertise and the expertise of that organization integrated in the embassy while I was there learning Russia. Yet again this was another learning experience for me.

*Q: What again sort of from the Washington perspective because this often becomes so important. You may be out in the field doing something but Washington has its own perspective, which often calls it. What was the feeling toward Yeltsin? He had been around for a while, he had been denigrated sort of by the Washington establishment for a while when Gorbachev was our boy...*

PICKERING: Yes. *Q: And he was, you know, I mean you can just see it from the newspaper accounts.*

PICKERING: This was one of the beauties of the election. I think President George H. W. Bush had helped bring Gorbachev along in his own evolution and moves toward reform. He felt that Gorbachev's precipitate removal, less by Yeltsin than by the old line Communists, but once he was in the position in the sense of being 'dissed' by the old line Communists and then recovered from the August 1990 events, some of that loyalty to him was still there. Then Yeltsin did become president of the Russian Federation. Over a period of time he emerged as the key leader in a new group of independent states, but also the key leader in Russia. Gorbachev was pushed away and that left some bad taste. With President Bush there was naturally a kind of interest in

and willingness to continue with Gorbachev. All that happened before I was personally involved so I had only a distant feel for it.

The Democrats coming out of the election were much more prepared to deal with the person now in place -- Yeltsin. They understood him and felt it was important to do so. While Yeltsin had received what he considered to be serious slights in his the visit to the Bush administration, Clinton set out to try to rectify that. He and Strobe were going to have to deal with Yeltsin. Yeltsin represented a fairly formidable force and over a period of time and, certainly during my time, showed himself generally on course. This is despite the fact that he made mistakes on some key issues. Yeltsin had a kind of insight, an internal compass that kept him on track on the big things -- doing the right things and in a democratic direction. That was one of his redeeming virtues. There were a lot of people who denigrated him for his drinking and denigrated him for his inability to make rapid change happen in Russia all at once. We all understood that it was a huge monolith that had to be moved around from a very extreme position in one direction to a rather extreme position for them in another direction. From Communism to an open market economy, from autocracy and dictatorship to some kind of representative government, and to do so while he had to undo all of the Communist apparatus and bureaucracy and all the institutions of the State. This was not going to be easy at all. It was going to be like making sausage, very messy and unappetizing to watch and that indeed that was the case.

A Polish economist, Adam Michnik, said that going from capitalism to communism was like making fish soup from an aquarium, but no one had figured out the opposite, how make an aquarium out of fish soup.

So while I would not be an apologist for Yeltsin and for some of his serious mistakes, especially on Chechnya, I would also say I think history will treat Yeltsin a little better than he's been treated in the immediate aftermath of his own period in office. And maybe even in comparison to Putin who has done other things in different ways than Yeltsin would have, but for Putin maybe not with the same kind of unerring sense of where the compass was pointing with respect to democracy at crucial points.

*Q: Of course we are looking at as you point out a work in progress. It was pretty remarkable where it is today compared to where it was. It's still very much evolving.*

PICKERING: It is and it is still very much. It happened that just as when we were talking about India and I was off to do something on Kashmir this afternoon, I'm off to do something on today's Russia with all the warts and with what I think are all also the many positive changes that have taken place. To treat Russia as our press tends as all black or all white is a serious mistake.

In retrospect one of the criticisms that has been made of the Clinton administration in the eight years in dealing with Russia is that perhaps we took Yeltsin too much for granted or that we painted too rosy a picture of Yeltsin and his administration. I said I will have to leave that to the historians to decide whether we had the right balance. But those of us who were there and certainly I did, I talked often about the deep concerns we had about corruption, about lagging reforms and the difficulties of making reforms happen; the deep sense of disturbance we had at what the Russian people were going through in terms of their own personal welfare. They went

through inflation, they went through periods of no salary payments, they went through periods of having to live literally on what crops they could raise on small garden plots at the edge of the large towns and cities and many of them had almost no access to private transportation or private ownership of buildings as communism went away. And they suffered in the cold and particularly the most victimized part of the Russian society was the pensioners -- the retirees who were in a way totally oppressed by this situation.

It was very tough. It was some of those issues I just mentioned that produced both the public demonstration against the people who tried the coup while Gorbachev was in Yalta in August 1990. Then to the same extent, who thought that they would support change against Yeltsin by supporting the armed parliamentarians of the right in the Russian white house in October 3rd of 1993 when it came to shooting there. With those two events I think certainly my view in the former, Bob Straus did exactly the right thing by supporting Yeltsin. I got a call during the evening of the October 3<sup>rd</sup> events embattled in the embassy basement. Strobe asked, "What do we do about Yeltsin?" I said, "You've got no choice, the folks who opened fire on the government and who are entrenched in the white house have not shown any interest in what we are interested in or in the kind of future for Russia that we want to support.

*Q: You might explain what the white house was.*

PICKERING: The white house was in effect a building on the Moscow River in downtown Moscow just across the street from our new embassy, built originally as the executive headquarters of the Russian Federation under Communist days. The executive office building was then changed with the fall of Communism to be the seat of the new Russian parliament, the Duma. After the October events, the Duma was moved out -- downtown to the former Gosplan building -- and it became the seat of the new Russian federal government, including the office of the Russian prime minister. It went through an evolution from executive to legislative to executive. It went through an evolution from totally pristine premises to one gutted by fire and then rapidly repaired by Turkish artisans brought in for the job to be the new seat of the Russian government.

The October events took place because over a period of time in the summer of '93, just after I had gotten there. The parliament competed what could best be considered an orgy of activity in changing the Russian constitution. They were able to change the constitution by majority vote and did so some 300 times. It was a parliament elected under communism but with competition among members of the Communist Party, so that they dominated this Russian parliament. They were especially with the fall of communism, a continued liability for Mr. Yeltsin. He and the parliament didn't get along. The Parliamentary leaders, in effect, revolted at a step taken in September by Yeltsin to dismiss them and to ask for new elections. There were real constitutional questions about whether he had the right to dismiss them or not. That was somewhat offset in the U.S. view by his willingness to hold very early elections after the dismissal -- elections for the new parliament. The fact was that the constitutional basis for the questions were really the hangover from the Soviet regime and its constitution rather than something that we would necessarily have considered to be a democratic, legitimate document. There are some who argue that he, Yeltsin, was illegal in his actions and preemptory in his decisions and wrong in the outcome. I totally disagreed with that, but I had even people in my

own embassy ex post facto who argued the other view, surprising me a little bit because they didn't argue with me while they were in the middle of the events. Were Yeltsin to have failed to do what he did, there was a good chance there would have been another effort at the top to return Russia to communism. I cannot but believe that would have resulted in greater bloodshed and a long civil conflict.

*Q: I would like to come back to that but let's sort of keep this a little bit chronological. Before you went out did you find yourself up against, it's the wrong term but did you find sort of competing views from you know we had this huge Soviet establishment, I'm talking about people who had studied the Soviet Union. This had been our major preoccupation, academic, from Congress and from the media and all. Things were changing there and I'm sure everybody had their point of view of how they wanted things to be and did you find yourself up against...I mean people coming to you and saying oh make sure you do this or that or we do this or that?*

PICKERING: I got a lot of free advice. I had a lot of opportunities to talk to people. I reached out to people, after all I was coming into a situation where arguably one of our most difficult posts would be in its most difficult period of change. And just given the nuclear question which was of tremendous of interest to the United States, where I was almost a total outsider, the difficulties were large and real. We had a number of experienced people, but we were going to have 15 new embassies in the region and staffing them ate up all of our extra assets very quickly and we were left looking around for retirees and others who could jump in and help. I had significant experience in the 60s with the Russians on the narrow subject of disarmament. Over my career at various times when I was assistant secretary in OES, I had made some trips to Russia to talk to them about everything from energy and the environment to science cooperation. But I was not in any way a deep expert. I had no language capability. It was not as if I had been steeped in or brought up in the tradition of dealing with the Soviets. To some extent I suppose people considered that with the new Russia it was good to have change. But I considered it a handicap. Again given particularly the closeness of the people who had served in Russia and the Soviet Union and their close knit relationships in the country and their long training and experience, it was for me obviously a difficult task to be parachuted into their midst to become the leader of this embassy. I relied very heavily on the idea that they were there to help and that we would have the best of all possible relationships if I could listen and understand what their points of view were. That I was responsible and would make up my mind about what it was that I wanted to recommend was clear. But I wouldn't do so without engaging them. In the best Foreign Service tradition they took me in.

They were extremely helpful. Interestingly enough the embassy wasn't totally dominated by what you would call people who had been diplomats in Russia in the days of the Soviet Union. We had some new people with strong language skills and newly acquired background. So we had this balance and I didn't see a split in the embassy along the lines of were you there in the '40s, '50s, '60s or '70s or '80s or were you newly arrived. I think that we did a good job in amalgamating our expertise and in giving each side both the opportunities to look at the new Russia, but also employing some of the vision and sense of history that were required to be able to deal with that on an intelligent basis. Jim Collins was particularly helpful and Jim had the expertise and he became my successor. So in effect that was tremendously valuable.



*Q: I'm interviewing Jim off and on now. Well did you when you went out did you find during your confirmation process did you find there were waves within Congress because often the Cold War has been fought out there. I was wondering whether you'd found...*

PICKERING: It was interesting. To describe the mood, I would have said there was obviously almost unalloyed happiness that the old Soviet system was gone. There was a sense of nostalgia among some for figures like Gorbachev. There was a sense of unease, uncertainty and extreme interest in Yeltsin. The Clinton administration's willingness to put their cards on Yeltsin was not everyone's approach in the Senate.

One of the first things they did was to have a summit in Vancouver of Yeltsin and Clinton. That took place I guess it was prior the G-8 meeting. Anyway we had this meeting in early April in Vancouver.

*Q: I think it was tied to the G-8 or something.*

PICKERING: It may have been to some part of the G-8.

*Q: Otherwise why would it have been in Canada? I don't know.*

PICKERING: It was in Canada because Clinton wasn't ready to go to Russia and Yeltsin wasn't ready to come to the U.S. at that stage.

*Q: OK.*

PICKERING: So Canada provided an interesting location. But as I remember because I was there, there was no other G-8 stuff going on, so it was really a U.S.-Russian summit in Vancouver. Enormous efforts were made because I hadn't had my hearings yet to get me allowed to go. Claiborne Pell who was Foreign Relations Committee chairman was agreeable. He had been an old friend and the administration approached him and he said, "Yes even though he hasn't had his hearings, he needs to go to that summit." So I had an opportunity to participate in most of that summit including joining the opening dinner between Yeltsin and Clinton, in which an awful lot of very important business, was done between them.

*Q: Well let's talk about this because before you went out to Moscow how would you describe the chemistry between Yeltsin and Clinton? It would seem to be pretty good, they are both of the type that...*

PICKERING: I don't think they had ever met before this dinner on April 1. So that was really a groundbreaking event and the chemistry went very, very well. I'm trying to think if they had met. If they had it was almost an ephemeral brush past thing. But Strobe had met Yeltsin and the preparation for this first meeting was extensive and very deep. It was the meeting at which the US Russia joint commission was set up. Our proposal was to use it to deal directly with U.S.-Russian relations in the area of reform and development in particular. The initial idea was that Gore as vice president would be asked to lead this on the US side. This would be an enormously

important task among his many, because he was also leading in space and some other areas that would make use of the vice president and elevate his stature.

We had a very tricky problem because there had been a vice president, Rutskoy, who didn't get along with Yeltsin and who later Yeltsin had dismissed. In any event, the proposal was being made by Clinton across the table and he said that I would like to appoint Vice President Gore to lead on our side. Well Yeltsin kind of looked at the ceiling and then grimaced. So Clinton jumped in and he said, "That doesn't mean you have to appoint your vice president. We would be very happy to have someone like Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. Yeltsin smiled and he got it - we were taking him off the hook. That was a very interesting insight into the personal dynamics.

Clinton had this enormous capability for understanding issues and foreigners and this enormous ability on a personal basis to make everybody around him feel personally important and well treated. His total charm offensive was turned on Yeltsin at this time in order to build a solid and an solid base. The two of them got along very, very well in all of their meetings in spite of the fact that they had some difficult issues to sell. So that was fascinating.

One of my observations was that Yeltsin, for all the obvious reasons and particularly as things got tougher for him domestically, would always give priority in his decision-making to domestic issues over foreign policy issues. So he was not hesitant at times in making statements about the U.S. relationship and things he was doing with the U.S. which we considered to be insensitive or even maybe negative from our point of view. But these would be gathered up and since they met fairly, often once or twice a year bilaterally, and certainly around the G-8, the president would go in with an agenda and would certainly seek to straighten out a number of these.

Over a period of time he was able to persuade Yeltsin on most of them. Yeltsin's habit was immediately to go out of those meetings and to have a joint press conference with Clinton. He would explain how he had convinced Clinton about the importance of an issue and the new forward step he was taking, even if it was antithetical to what he had been saying domestically. He would turn it into a victory for himself. He explained how this was a great victory for Russian diplomacy in his own quiet way. He didn't actually phrase it that way, but that's the way he conveyed it to his public. His public, given the Russian tradition obviously of great faith in the strong leader representing Russia, were very happy at the end of the day and this resulted in relatively few negative comments in the press or from the public even though there was a change in approach on the Russian side in many cases.

There was obviously a very strong support mechanism inside Russia for Yeltsin, including the oligarchs who had taken over much of the TV system, but who cooperated with Yeltsin as he cooperated with them. This was one of the many wheels within wheels operations that were going on all the time in Russia. But it was interesting that that played out too in this bilateral relationship.

*Q: When you got there sort of how would you describe the situation you had to deal with, what were the issues? Obviously nuclear problems must have been very high on your...*

PICKERING: Nuclear problems were high. I was very worried about the domestic situation because we were at the beginning of the unfolding of the confrontation between Yeltsin and his communist opposition in the Duma over reform. There was constant sniping back and forth. The Duma was attempting to use their legal ability to change the constitution against Yeltsin, They tried to develop ways to restrict his program -- and most of all his reform efforts. Obviously, the conflict was bringing the whole flow of events to a standstill.

Over the time, Yeltsin appointed a commission to prepare a new constitution. While it gave some real power to the Duma, it aggregated considerable additional control to the president.

Yeltsin had a big problem with inflation. As things settled in, he changed the currency, taking off three zeros -- as he brought inflation under control. He actually over a period of time made it very difficult for Russians to get their full money out of such exchange. He limited the exchange of old for new money to large notes only and not the small ones which many poorer Russians were able to accumulate and on which they depended for their purchases. He was struggling with a thousand and one reforms. It was before the beginning of NATO enlargement, but when NATO enlargement came along that too was a difficult problem for us to settle.

We had a serious problem with the Russians selling engines for maneuverable spacecraft to the Indians. The Indians could then have used the technology for maneuvering reentry vehicles on their offensive missile fleet. It was a technology we didn't want to see go to anybody else. So we had a long and difficult negotiation and discussion helped enormously by Leon Fuerth who was then working for Vice President Gore where, I think, Leon and his team came up with the idea that the Russians wanted additional space launches for U.S. satellites. We could give them more launches if they would be helpful to us in not delivering the engines to India. In the meantime I had been talking to Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and others about the importance of the Indian issue and how we didn't want to add to proliferation, because I had just come from India.

*Q: Was part of the issue on this we wanted to, I mean I assume that the Russians wanted to keep their space program going and the Indian market...*

PICKERING: The Indians were paying cash and...

*Q: And so this was ideological, this was commercial.*

PICKERING: Well this would have to do with national pride also. It had an ideological focus there because after all the Russians had a world premier space program for a long period of time and it was falling on hard times. They didn't have the budget to support it. In the meantime we turned around and showed them a different way to keep their space program going by permitting them to sell all these launches to the international community. We were continuing to cooperate with them in the international space station in other areas and so this was the continuation some activity that had begun some time ago, but we were ready to expand it.

In the meantime, the administration had proposed that the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission in a sense bring together eight or ten cabinet members on each side in specific areas of activity. Each one of them had a whole series of cooperative goals, everything from improving our commercial

aviation relationships to health programs, to assist the Russians in getting access to the newest health technology and agriculture and in energy cooperation and so on. This was a big, big effort in effect to take programs which were supportive of reform and development in the former Soviet Union and turn them into a kind of bilateral cooperation arrangement at the cabinet level. The Russians could have access to the top levels of the U.S. government with their ministers, but where we would also try to set the stage for applying, if we could call it this, a metric for success. The joint processes were going forward, most of which were designed to try to get the Russians to deliver on the kinds of discussions and promises they had made about reform. To assist them to do that and behind this was an assistance program that had a great deal of money attached to it and a great deal of capability to try to open up new fields for the Russians and new ways of thinking especially about economics.

In the meantime, I guess I have to tell you that almost everybody we dealt with in one way or another had been part of the bureaucracy of the former Soviet Union. There were just no other people. Some of them were independent thinkers, but some of them were just bureaucrats and a lot of them still thought very much the way in which they had thought under the former Soviet Union. Heavily based in status and heavily in a state role and in those days by some of the foreign policy priorities with which the Soviet Union grew up and that did not make change come easily. Not all of that died away immediately. You had to have an entirely new crew come in. Dealing with that set of issues was very, very hard in terms of getting the Russians to understand and to move. The further away from Moscow you got, the more it was clear that the less things had changed. I can recall in my first couple of years I did a lot of trips. I went to see a lot of Russian governors in their local "Oblasts" (provinces) and spent a lot of time with them. Because their tradition of hospitality was that when you came out to their Oblast, you worked in their schedule. You saw a lot of people they wanted you to see. I saw some I wanted to see. They offered you the hospitality of a large dinner. I had my interpreter, of course, and I had one or two embassy officers. Usually on their side it would be the whole bureaucracy, the leadership of the bureaucracy in the Oblast or province where we went. But you would have a chance in the drinking that they wanted to see how far they could out drink you. We were certainly still in that period -- in the notion -- that any good Russian governor could drink the American ambassador under the table. That was their effort, to try to make this happen.

The dinner was punctuated by these toasts. It early became self evident to me the only way I was going to get anything across to the governors about what the future held in store as we saw it was in my toast to explain problems and issues That included how in a democracy we balanced things like social justice on the one hand and economic efficiency on the other -- a struggle we all have. But it was a struggle they were having, because they had become hugely inefficient through government control and usually corrupted. So they had neither social justice nor economic efficiency with government control. So they harvested the worst of both worlds out of their old system.

Well I made no dent with these guys except to talk to them about the issue. None of them, I thought, was rushing to change. But on the other hand I tried to set the predicate for at least a way of looking at the future, which was not highly politicized and which gave them a sense of the problems that were going to be important for them for their own future.

My tactical approach to the drinking was to use the first course, *zakuski* -- mainly cold meats, black bread and hors d'oeuvres to prepare myself for the vodka. It helped to also depend on excellent Russian black bread, smoked salmon, caviar and cold ham to perform this task.

The routine was that everyone on their side would give a toast, often with local and political content. I would have to respond and Embassy officers would also fill in. Certain of these toasts were *dad na*, bottoms up. The vodka was often iced. The glasses were small, but the number of drinks was measured by the numbers of toasts. I have to say, I held my own.

*Q: Well I would have thought that you would have found yourself with a major diplomatic problem in that here was a very proud nation. One can't underestimate the feeling of Mother Russia and their system is collapsing and here we are this upstart nation coming in, that we weren't preaching but yet in a way we did have some of the answers. How did you...?*

PICKERING: We had to be cautious. We tried to be cautious. Not all of my instructions fit that model. The usual approach from Washington was to provide talking points. They represented often compromises in Washington among the agencies and players. Depending on the issue. I would go by and see them and ask them for their point of view and then ask questions designed to try to move the conversation beyond their point of view. I would make observations and suggestions about what might in the end be a useful way to proceed jointly. That was often on reform and development and democracy issues.

On foreign policy questions I was blessed by the fact that I had at the Russian foreign ministry an experienced old American hand. Not that he had spent a lot of time in the U.S. but he had spent a lot of his time dealing with U.S. relations, George Mamedov, who is now Russian ambassador in Canada. Very early on, Strobe saw the benefits of working together with him, Strobe had a regular meeting with George several times a year in what we called the strategic dialogue. Those meetings reinforced for the longer term the things that we were looking at in our foreign policy as well as the things that I could do with George on a regular basis. It was a good relationship and it developed in a sense that while we obviously had differences, we could also think through and work together on solutions to many of them. George was in many ways a terrific problem solver and wanted to deal with problems and issues and he wanted obviously to do the best that he could for his side in dealing with them and I on mine. But it was the type of relationship where from time to time I could say to George you know the two of us have to talk alone.

*Q: This is Tape 17, Side 1, with Tom Pickering. Yeah?*

PICKERING: And we sort of developed a convention. I would see George frequently over at the Russian foreign ministry which was the old Soviet foreign ministry. George had an office in one of the upper floors. A tradition on the Communist side was that he had a meeting room and then he had his office next door and you would always meet in the meeting room. You didn't bring foreign diplomats into your office. I suppose this was for security as much as anything else. So we would often meet in the meeting room, but sometimes when I had something I wanted to sit and talk with him about alone, I would say George can we go into your office. He'd go into his office and have it become the place where we could sit and talk. I had no illusions, in fact, that George was unwatched or that I was unwatched, but it was always very useful to sit and talk with

George and say, “You know, we’ve got this problem, let me tell you what I think are the limits of our capability to deal with it. Let’s hear what you think the limits are?” It worked best if I set out the ideas and parameters first. Often the Russians depended on us for our ideas about how to get out of a problem or impasse. I would try that out. George would often say, “Well I can do that, but I have to do it this way. Will that work?” Or “I have the following roadblocks,” and I would say, “Well I will have to go back and think about it and see how we can move ahead.” Often these were things that we had worked on in Moscow and after we talked to George we’d send into Washington, rather than to clear necessarily all the ideas with Washington ahead of time. But we had a pretty good idea of where we could go and where we wanted to go. It was extremely useful to do that with George. He did that as well with Strobe. When they had a larger group meeting, it was harder for him to do that, but if he could meet alone with Strobe or with me or in a very small group, he tended to be more creative about where to go. We also saw his hand at work at the larger meetings where he was a very trusted player. He had access to the top levels in a lot of the Russian ministries and was able to plant ideas that we would then see come back at us from them and that was useful. At times, we would get into places where we were between a rock and a hard place and nothing would move. Then we would have to just sort of live with that for a while and we would go back and think about it and see where we would go. George had a very good idea of what the various parts of the Russian bureaucracy would do or refuse to do. He could guide out thinking so that we could work out ways to deal with these concerns compatible with our own interests.

It was a challenging and interesting opportunity to work with somebody in that kind of otherwise frozen situation who was prepared to help try to make things move.

*Q: Can you give me an example of a problem or two that...*

PICKERING: Well on NATO enlargement over a period of time a number of things came up. The obvious things were could we make declarations on what we were going to do with nuclear weapons and forward deployments? Could we help them by revising the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty so that our deployments would not be moving forward? We got agreement to some of their tank reductions and artillery reductions in the Caucasus as a result. So there were creative ways to try to use on-going opportunities to build confidence in the relationship as we went ahead. There were openings to setting up Russian representation at NATO. We talked with them about Bosnia and how to move ahead there. Certainly people like George Joulwan, who was the SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander in Europe) at the time and who went out of his way to deal positively with a Russian general assigned to his headquarters. He was able to talk with him as he dealt with Bosnia and brought him into his staff meetings and paid attention to the small things, the protocol things, and that obviously made a difference. The Russian army was not an inconsiderable force.

I had access to the ministry of defense, went by to see the minister from time to time who was General Grachev. But also, I had a chance to see the chief of operations. They had a civilian Deputy Minister of Defense, Andrei Kokoshin, who had been an academic and had developed over the years good relations with Bill Perry who was the U.S. secretary of defense. He had strong arms control experience. We were able to build with Andrei on a lot of those things.

Personal relationships in many areas helped to clear away problems that came up from time to time -- as long as we could talk about them.

*Q: How did you find the Gore-Chernomyrdin relationship and how did that work?*

PICKERING: It developed over time. Mr. Chernomyrdin was not a typically easy guy to deal with. He had a long history and he was the prime minister of the Russian Federation. He saw his role as extremely important; he was not going to move for things that happened just to suit our fancy. But vice president Gore was very effective with him. They had a number of very important conversations and they had a number of useful agreements. At one point Gore had brought Chernomyrdin around to an agreement which the president had first kind of set up with Yeltsin. We would get the Russians to limit and then end their conventionalist weapons supply to Iran. That required some doing and it required some hard work. We had to get from the Russians a list of what they had still yet to deliver under existing contracts that kind of thing and Vice President Gore handled that remarkably well and we got all those pieces in place.

*Q: What about dealing with some of the problems that always struck me as probably one of the hardest things to deal with would be to make Russia a viable country to do something about the collective farm system and turning it into a productive...you need a tremendous line of supplies. I mean if your John Deere tractor breaks down you can get a part within hours in Iowa but there was nothing like that.*

PICKERING: Well it was interesting. The evolution or change in Russia left agriculture behind for most of my stay with some rare exceptions. There was one area that was of great interest. I had done a course in Soviet economics at George Washington years before and looking at agricultural organization was a key factor. Russia had traditional problems with agriculture and with the state and collective farms. That system hadn't resolved issues of low and poor quality food production, post harvest food losses and a weak system for food processing and packaging. The revolt at the Russian White House in October of 1993, and the use of force against that by the Russian state and the locking up of a number of the revolutionaries, almost all of them were closely associated with the Russian Communist Party, was an important development. We then had something unusual happen. The Communist Party split to avoid the feared consequences of their being outlawed. You had the emergence in the rural countryside of the Agrarian Party. The Agrarian party was the Communist Party in another guise. It was Agrarian because it would require a whole new set of legal actions to arrest them. It was a way of protecting themselves against an anti-Communist effort coming out of the events that took place then in '93. But it meant in effect that the leaders of the state farms and collective farms were all automatically made local secretaries general of the Agrarian Party. The Agrarian Party was, in fact, totally aligned with the Communist Party and voted regularly with it. But it also meant they had enormous local political power because they could determine who worked and who didn't work and who got food and who didn't get food on the collective farms. They had an automatic voting machine of considerable strength in the Duma. Together with the Communists, the ability of the reformers to privatize agriculture on a wholesale basis was widely limited by his move.

What was happening was that for some of the state farms and collective, the individual members of the state farms and collectives could, with some pressure and some hard effort, get their own

land, the piece of land in the collective that was theirs. Usually that meant if they were going to farm it they were given the worst land. Land very clearly that the state farm or collective wanted to get rid of, but the new independent farmers could get it. They had very little in the way of financial inputs or agricultural inputs to use or develop the land and start producing crops. In a few cases where there was more liberality in the collectives, a number of people were given better land. Some of those were able to take the broken down and discarded farm machinery in these collectives, which always had a large machinery park on the edge of the collectives, and rehabilitate it for their own use. Traditional Russian ability to make machinery work with chewing gum and bailing wire was at its best here. They were good at it. Others had to go out on the market and get machinery and to keep it in repair. And there were some people producing new machinery and there was a spare part system -- it wasn't totally absent, but it was not robust. I would say to my best recollection the number of private farmers was 250 thousand. That meant a very small percentage of the agricultural land was in private hands.

The other interesting phenomenon was that under Communism they had begun a process years before of giving people small plots on the edges of large cities so that they could not only farm, usually potatoes, through the summer months and harvest in the winter but often they could construct a small building, even a small dacha on the premises. This led to a couple of things. It led to, in fact, an intensive amount of what we would call market garden agriculture for themselves generally. But it meant increasingly that very large percentages of the population was more and more dependent on this agriculture produce from the areas immediately around the cities. Increasingly, this two percent of the agricultural land produced a large volume of agricultural produce. It filled the gap created by declining state production and provided much for the Russian population to live on. It was traditional by '93 to see during the harvest period in September everybody's little Russian car, Lada or Volga, coming back on the weekends with bags of potatoes up on the roof. They then put it in some place on the balconies of their apartments until it got too cold and then brought them inside. Sometimes they had storage units in the basement to keep potatoes over the winter to tide themselves over the winter. This was one of the ways the Russian people faced and overcame the kind of hardships they had to face particularly in the bad agricultural seasons.

It is worth noting here that we were all a little mystified as to how Russians, particularly pensioners whose pensions had stopped or been reduced, were surviving. I asked an interpreter from Ulan Ude in Siberia with whom we had visited for her answer. She said it was a number of factors. First, everyone tried to get at least two jobs. The Soviet expression for a government job was "we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us!" That allowed time for another job and often couples could arrange for each member to have several jobs. Secondly, since all movement was tightly controlled in the propusk system, people in apartments knew who was being paid in which month and managed collectively to borrow from each other over the year to make ends meet. And finally, the crops raised in the garden plots, particularly potatoes, were a God send.

I visited private farmers in those days just to get a sense to see what they were up against. I can recall in February in deep snow north of Moscow going up to see some private farmers that USAID knew about and some of whom they were helping. It was quite phenomenal. Aside from the deep snow and cold in getting in to see these people, they were keeping animals, a lot of them at home. One woman who ran an all-woman private farm was running a stable full of cows



and pigs and doing very well. She marketed the meat locally and seemed to be keeping alive, but she was one of those absolutely fearless driving, large Russian women who was going to succeed come hell or high water. Her determination was enormous. It required that kind of determination and hard work and almost unceasing physical labor to make private farming successful in Russia.

People have told me since that more of private farming has opened up and that more land has opened up. There were other things going on. There was a tendency in those days and I think since for large foreign economic agricultural operators to want to buy large pieces of Russian land. That was resisted. It was part of their own feeling of nationalism and protectionism and attachment to collective organization. It was engendered and supported by predominance of the Agrarian Party, not only in the countryside, but it was also able to swing votes in the Duma against wholesale privatization.

Another issue had to do with agricultural efficiency. The state collectives and state farms were mainly social welfare institutions for the elderly and for the young. So roughly a quarter of the resident population actually contributed any labor to production. Machinery was broken down and often discarded and state subsidies were large in terms of getting inputs. Agricultural technology had fallen behind particularly in those days although people tell me now extension services have improved markedly. That was one of the things that we wanted to do. But the big problem was post harvest food losses. There was no real open competitive marketing system to move harvests from the field to the processing plant through the road and rail system to the retailer. People told me and I think it was generally accepted that it may have been up to thirty percent post harvest food losses.

*Q: I've heard that.*

PICKERING: ...in Russia at least at that period. Whether it's better or not I don't know but it compares roughly to two percent in the United States.

There was a lot of inefficiency and as a result a wave of imports. There was a propensity for people with money to consume the imports and leave the domestic stuff for local consumption. In a lot of cases there wasn't enough domestic production for local consumption. People had to rely on their own ability with these dacha plots in the countryside to stay alive.

One other thing sprung out of the dacha plots. Russians loved the countryside, liked to get out of the urban areas and weekends are sacred. In that regard, in the Russian cities beginning back in '91, people were able to organize by hook or crook land and ownership by paying off the collectives on the edge of large cities and to turn them in part into dacha colonies. People went out to build, some of them worked on their own, some of them hired individuals, some of them are large brick mansions, some of them are simple log houses, but these grew up everywhere. So, if you fly over and around a major Russian city and you look at the outskirts, out sometimes to 40 kilometers or beyond, in all those forests and fields and farms, you will see these wide areas of dacha colonies. Of course, none of them was subject to sanitary requirements, water was problematic, but sewage was even more. They are spread out and not heavily used, so I suppose they don't provide major health hazards, but there was no zoning except for those run maybe by the ex-generals. They would organize a place and they would all have big brick houses together

that looked reasonably good, but the rest of it was muddy streets, wild variation in architecture and houses stemming from the lavish and imposing to the unprepossessing and tiny. That has all gone up since 1991. It's not just true in Moscow, you see it outside all Russian cities. It gave Russians a sense of personal freedom and an ability to own a premises matched by what happened in the apartments and other buildings in the cities where they were privatized and generally privatized very advantageously. In those days for ten thousand rubles you could privatize your apartment. They borrowed the money, which after inflation became ten dollars.

*Q: OK, today is the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2007. Tom I will sort of let you pick up wherever you want us to go on that.*

PICKERING: Well let's first talk a little bit about agriculture and competition for markets. I don't know whether I covered this or not, I guess history will not forgive me for too much redundancy but that's all right. But Russia was at that point becoming more dependent on imported goods, particularly luxury processed food goods for a small element of the population that could afford it. As I said earlier, the rest of the population depended a lot on what they were able to raise themselves and in some ways on the very rickety sporadic national distribution system that provided stuff in the local markets so it was not easy.

Initially certainly before I got there but after '91 there was a wave of imports, everything from Snickers bars, which were quite famous, to wheat and grain. Of course, interestingly enough increasingly chicken legs, which the Russians seemed to enjoy and which helped the major producers of chicken in the United States figure out what to do with the legs, which were not wildly saleable in the U.S. So it was a complimentary relationship that made for a lot of good. But the Russians saw this as an attack on their ability to produce for themselves. Since I was there for chicken war one, but we've been through several chicken wars in which the Russians in a fit of national preoccupation about health and sanitation used phytosanitary requirements to deny inputs in a particular area, often for protectionist purposes. Then for a long period of time they wanted to have their vets travel and visit every wee processing facilities in the United States to approve it and to make sure, in effect, that it met their high standards, high standards which are applied at the border for imports, but not internally.

So this raises a difficult problem, not that anybody should export to Russia or anyplace else material or meat that doesn't meet sanitary conditions, but it was clearly an effort thinly disguised which was protectionism as opposed to real health concerns. Well there was a basis in part for protectionism because they got an awful lot of pressure from their farmers for that particular protection because we could sell what came to be called in Russia 'Bush legs' a lot cheaper than they could produce them -- in large measure because of the highly developed nature of U.S. agriculture production particularly in these areas. It tended to drive their very difficult process of trying to expand their agricultural production crazy to see these imports eating away at what base they had and they were not very efficient at it. So there were, as I said, strong feelings on both sides and...

*Q: I might just point out that if one wants to go back in these oral histories go back to the 1960s they will have the chicken wars fought there with the Europeans, the West Europeans.*

PICKERING: Exactly.

*Q: I mean this is a big deal.*

PICKERING: It is a big deal and it involved initially \$500-600 billion worth of U.S. exports on the one hand and a lot of Russian concern about how to nurture and develop their own chicken raising industry on the other. Something because we've had successive chicken wars including in recent years they were not necessarily totally able to master in their time. In any event, that was an example of one of those kinds of issues.

In another quite the opposite was interesting in a sense that McDonald's had opened up and were gradually expanding. I was there, I think, for the opening of their third store. Again, I have a recollection somewhere, I may have already said this, but Yeltsin himself came. It was on the new Arbat which had been turned pretty much principally into a walking street for shopping and not far from the embassy residence. It was interesting because on the opening day only they served beer. Normally McDonald's wouldn't in Russia and doesn't in Russia, as far as I know, serve beer, but Mr. Yeltsin came and his fondness for alcohol being well known, but that was not the purpose of his visit. It was kind of to give a boost to McDonald's and as it went along McDonald's in the first two openings had become sort of a place of distinction. As someone put it to me, a way the Russians could take a trip to the West without having to pay the airfare or get the visa. The third store was in that sense equally remarkable in terms of public attention to it and the degree of focus on it and all the rest. One of the interesting things was the story that when Yeltsin asked the lady supervisor of that particular McDonald's how much she made, she apparently made more rubles than he did although with all his perks, his full income was obviously considerably larger.

But the other interesting thing was that McDonald's was pretty ruthless both in its training and in its vetting of its Russian employees. There was lots of unemployment then in Russia so they could insure a fairly high quality of service, but it was not something that naturally came in the Russian psyche to provide the kind of service that McDonald's was used to providing its customers. This was one of the things that represented an unusual change in the early days of post-Communism that happened around the kind of the food world. McDonalds would take and train employees but would rapidly let go that were not able to adjust to the service ethic they wished to provide.

It was also true that in terms of this competition for marketing, within a few years it drove Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow and an interesting and very fascinating figure on his own, to begin to establish his own Russian fast food chain. Most of it began after I had left, but it obviously had some competitive capacity and served what were particularly Russian fast foods, a lot of kasha, cereal and things of that sort, not so palatable for western tastes, but it did market to the large Russian audience who wanted this. It represented a less heavy dent in their income than McDonald's, although McDonald's prices were certainly comparable to what was charged in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world. It was for the Russians a real luxury evening out with a comparable expenditure.

So that I think are some anecdotal insights into this issue of competition protection in agriculture.

*Q: What role as you, as the American ambassador, play in this sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Well I played the role of encouraging the Russians to look for compromise solutions and we had several opportunities to see, I guess it was Dan Glickman who was then secretary of agriculture, who was leading the effort. We were heavily engaged between the trade and agriculture ministries on both sides to try to reach a solution to the chicken legs problem and the embassy from time to time was asked to carry out instructions and talk to various officials. The contact was quite intense Washington to Moscow on this. We kept Washington informed as to what was going on and gave them our sense of where we thought the issue might move to be settled.

*Q: Well did you find you had to keep reigns on our agricultural attaché or anything like that?*

PICKERING: No, I don't think so. I forget whether we actually ever had an AG attaché. We had AID programs in agriculture. So if we had somebody I wasn't impressed at least at this stage by the nature of the requirement to keep him under control. I don't think that was a problem. Agriculture was a poor sister in the Russian economy. They always seemed to have problems in Communism and in post-Communism in finding ways to deal with it. I think in part because of this fascination originally with the collectivization and in part with the obvious political obstacles that they had put in place -- even post-Communism. I think I mentioned this before that the state and collective farms became the locus of the Agrarian Party which was really the Communist party in the rural areas, as part of the breakup to protect the party from the government under Yeltsin who didn't particularly like it and saw it as their principal enemy.

*Q: Was there the feeling that the elimination of the Ukraine from Russia was going to make, I mean this is, of course, where the soil was and all that. Or agricultural wise was it so integrated that it really didn't make any difference?*

PICKERING: No, it is interesting very few people advanced that argument to me. The other regions around Ukraine were also part of the black soil areas and so they had plenty of agricultural potential in southern Russia and the Oblasts along the Ukrainian border, not nearly as extensive as the Ukraine. And I thought that there probably was some feeling about that, but the whole mentality under Communism was heavily focused on industrial production, high technology and new advances. From time to time we all remember Khrushchev's interest in corn production, not that I think corn was necessarily widely adapted to climatic conditions in Russia, but they attempted it. But certainly the Russians dealt successfully with wheat over the years although it was climatically dependent. In the years since I've been there, and I've followed harvests, it's been heavily climatically dependent. Organizational arrangements seem to also have worked their toll in the sense that they were badly organized in food processing and badly organized in protection of harvests. Post-harvest food losses were high which has been something that traditionally afflicted the Russian agricultural system. Some of that is changing now but I think very slowly.

*Q: The virgin land policy was supposedly Khrushchev's disaster in wheat. Was that a...?*

PICKERING: Well I mean it's true. I traveled in Kazakhstan in the spring of '95 in the area that they attempted to open up and it was obvious truly marginal land -- semi-desert and pre-desert areas. The remnants of large numbers of windbreaks were there and very large fields but it was really hard to see that in dry years that land was going to produce anything useful. Then in the rare wet years it might, but it was very difficult farming. Not, I think, as technically maybe advanced as say raising wheat in the eastern Washington state was where ten inches of rainfall could produce a reasonable wheat crop with the varieties we have and the technologies we have. Maybe the climatic conditions in Kazakhstan and the other marginal areas were maybe more tenuous and less steady and predictable say than eastern Washington or eastern Oregon.

But it was that same kind of let's exploit the marginal area and the Russians did it with a great deal of self sacrifice and dedication. It was like building the second Tran Siberian railroad, the BAM, but I think not really with noticeably good long-term results and a certain amount of damage in the soil conservation area and things of that sort -- maybe an acceleration of some desertification.

*Q: Well how did you do, while we are on the transformation of the old Soviet Union, how during your time how did we view the adoption of a military industry into a peaceful...*

PICKERING: That's interesting to look at because I think first the military budget became constrained so that Yeltsin and his team were not able to keep up the high level of expenditure, which the military had enjoyed. So things like advanced programs and highly expensive programs slowed down. While the military intake remained rather high, it became very sloppily organized and very badly run. So people could escape conscription one way or another, although it was usually the poor country kids who got involved and it was a very tough and harsh life for them and the Russian military generally suffered. In addition to this at least serious difficulty in spending, they suffered from a serious problem in non-commissioned officers and overstaffing of officers. To some extent this top-heaviness, the higher you got up the more top heavy things were, so that while the army became over a period of time gradually smaller, for a whole series of conditions budgetary restraints, fights against conscription and all the rest and became increasingly less proficient and less well organized and effective. It tended not to remove at the top-level lots of senior officers, general officers in particular, so that, in effect, it became kind of Gilbert and Sullivan rather than serious effort. The kept units on the books to keep general officer billets but the units were hollowed out or nearly non-existent in military terms. While they were very serious people and obviously extremely capable and well-intentioned people, it generally happened that over a period of time, particularly in the ground forces, only a few units were kept up to strength and with high proficiency. This included at least one armored division around Moscow for regime stability reasons and one of their airborne divisions in northwestern Russia around Pskov and a few others.

It was notable at the time when Yeltsin went into Chechnya for the first time that the initial battalion, maybe a half dozen companies to make it up, were each drawn from a separate unit. I was told that in fact they had to cobble these battalions together by stealing people from various companies in the units and all of which were under strength. They were not really capable of functioning at battalion strength internally among themselves much less with other battalions in concert. This represented a primary weakness in their operational capability very early on. You

saw that coupled with mistakes. They had been fighting in the famous New Year's fight, I guess it was in '95 or '94, where they went into the center of Grozny with tanks, unprotected by infantry and were attacked by Chechen guerrillas from the buildings and basements around them. It turned out to be a near massacre because they had anti-tank weapons but no infantry to fight off the people attacking. Apparently, no artillery at least readily located to dig these guys out of whatever buildings they were firing from. The Chechen guerrillas dominated the underground. Apparently there was an elaborate system that they could move around between buildings and things of that sort.

It was an interesting urban guerrilla disaster for the Russians fighting from inside armored vehicles but without using all of the best tactics of urban warfare to protect themselves.

*Q: Well how did we view the military there? Were you propounding why don't you get yourself into a professional army the way most we've gone and others have gone? It would seem to make sense because they...*

PICKERING: I mean we've talked about it, it was a little difficult because don't forget we were still within two years of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communism to be advocating and preaching efficiency in the military of what had been our former, most salient enemy. But it was important and at times I said, "You know it would really be in your interest to cut down the number of hollowed out units you have to get more readily organized and to deal with your primary problems," which were then the question of their long exposed China frontier in the Far East and central Asia. The large number of people who could come back and forth across that where they had limited or no real defensive capability and to deal with internal disturbances inside the state created a significant problem for them. It is a problem they now have solved by keeping tactical nuclear weapons close by.

Instead they sort of reached out and made an effort to make an example of Chechnya which in turn hit them in the nose. They were not capable of really ever fully mastering Chechnya and everybody recalled the fact that Tolstoy had written in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century about a 49-year effort of the Czar to take charge of Chechnya and never total ability to run the place.

Chechnya was interesting because as we looked at it demographically, it was the one place in Russia in a series of Oblasts and republics, the second order administrative divisions where locals were a majority. Chechnya was a republic and the difference was that Stalin thought that it was useful to give some 22 units of the Russian Federation republic status which meant that they got a flag and they got a local legislature and a local president instead of a governor. But other than that they were completely under the Soviet thumb. But this tended to recognize places that had a more distinct ethnic colorization even if they were small. Chechnya was interesting because it was the one place, I think, we found in all of the 89 subdivisions of the Russian Federation where there was a majority of non-Russians. In almost all the other places the bow toward ethnicity was reasonably small. I remember going to a small republic in central Russia east of Moscow, Udmurtia, interestingly enough where Mr. Kalashnikov lives in Izhevsk. I asked what is the percentage of people here who speak Udmurt, which is a Finno-Ugric language, and they said maybe seven percent. So you got a sense that whatever bow it was to local ethnicity, this Finno-Ugric linguistic group it was not a very large percentage of the population.

*Q: Well something like Chechnya did we have any particular, during you time; stand on this of what to do?*

PICKERING: Yes, we were sorely conflicted. Early on given the close relationship between President Clinton and Yeltsin, there was a tendency to think well here they had this outrageous uprising that had to be dealt with. There was very little interest in the notion of whether the Russians actually provoked some of this or not. The Russians, of course, felt unduly provoked because they had a tendency to connect Chechens with criminal classes and criminal outrages around Russia with Chechen nationalism. The notion was abroad that Mr. Yeltsin thought that to win an election it was a good thing to have a kind of successful military campaign -- not a new idea in world politics, which we all know. So I think this was sold to him and maybe he sold himself as a basis for his ability to maintain his strength particularly leading into the 1996 election in which it was clear that early on his personal popularity had plummeted into single digits in Russia. However that may be, there is a strong feeling among ethnic Russians particularly in urban areas against "Chorny" (blacks' as they call them), who happen to be darker skinned people often from the Caucasus and often of Islamic religious faith. Chechens were widely identified as being pre-eminent among the group labeled chorny. So all those prejudices and all of that other lead them, I think, to engage themselves in this particular area I think unwisely so.

But it was interesting because when I arrived in Russia in '93, it was clear that the Russians, this was not widely masked, were deeply concerned after the breakup of the Soviet Union and about the potential for further rifts along perforation lines appearing all over Russia on the basis of ethnic differences and to some extent maybe regional differences. There was a fear, I think maybe ill founded, but certainly a strong fear that somehow the Russian Far East was once again going to split itself off into a separate status and try to seek full independence. There was deep concern that the Muslim areas in the central and lower Volga regions, places like Tatarstan and as I recall to the south and east a little more Bashkortostan, the Bashkiria would separate. The Tartars were going to somehow create this internal Muslim exclave or enclave and seek for independence. Early on at that point it was interesting that Yeltsin had negotiated a treaty with the president of Tatarstan who is still there, who was quite a remarkable guy -- a treaty that gave him quite a bit more local authority as the president of a republic. He was a republican president of Tatarstan and got more authority than most of the republican president's had. Over a period of time, this sort of became what the Russians looked at as the potential model for Chechnya, never actually implemented although in the early stages of ending the first Chechen war in which one of the Oligarchs, Mr. Berezovsky played a role, they were using the Tatarstan Treaty model as a potentially a mutually acceptable arrangement for how to keep Chechnya inside Russia. Certainly keeping the Russian federation together was a huge red line for the Russians while at the same time trying to keep the Chechens tranquilized or tranquil and not revolting by giving them this kind of maximum of local autonomy that Tatarstan and President Shaimiev of Tatarstan had achieved in his negotiations with Yeltsin.

*Q: Speaking of these states within states and states without states and all how did we feel or were we doing anything, say it with, of course, Ukraine being the big one but also Belarus and Kazakhstan and all of that.*

PICKERING: Let me, before I get to that, finish up. It was clear in Chechnya in the early days Vice President Gore came and said, "Well this is sort of like the American civil war where the Union has to be kept together." That, of course, raised problems. It was what the Russians wanted to hear. In my view it did not necessarily reflect reality. I talked to Gore about it in the car and said my recommendation was that we should stay away from casting ourselves too closely to one side or other. There were too many wrongs on both sides of this issue for us to join a fight even if would make Yeltsin happy. Instead, we should be in favor of a settlement and hopefully a peaceful, negotiated settlement and that would suit our policy options much better than trying to pick sides. I think by that time he had been influenced enough, from where I don't know, to think it was important to take sides. It probably helped him in his relationship with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and President Yeltsin to have done so.

*Q: I mean were you feeling...how were we looking upon the breakup of Yugoslavia at that time. It was in the process wasn't it?*

PICKERING: Yeah, it was kind of happening all at the same time, and it went through most of the period of time that I was engaged in Russia. It became a major effort with Russia in July of '91 I think, maybe of '92. I had a long talk in Belgrade with Warren Zimmerman about it and he said, "It's off and running and it isn't going to stop." I talked to I remember to the Croatian President about it with almost no capacity to influence them. We talked actually on the phone so it was almost impossible to have any real positive influence on it. Yugoslavia was breaking up.

The Russians throughout this were less influenced by the notion of break up because they had already been through the breakup of the Soviet Union than they were in their relations with the Orthodox Serbs. It was fascinating and interesting how both the Slavic and Orthodox connection tended very, very readily to glue them to the Serbs. It was also true then as it is now that the Serbs occupied the central position among the southern Slavs and geopolitically were as robust as any of the other parties. They tended to be in the center of control of the country. I think the Russian choice of the Serbs was both ethnic and religious but also strategic from the point of view of who was likely to be for the long term the most dominant player in the area. The Serbs inherited the capital, a lot of the military equipment, most of the military organization, interior lines and central control.

*Q: And most of the army, I mean the officer corps.*

PICKERING: The officer corps certainly, so from that point of view it made a difference. I should add too that on a slightly different subject you asked about defense and defense conversion. We talked about the weaknesses and the growing weaknesses in the defense establishment, which have continued, although within the last couple of years (2014) the Russians have seen fit to try to repair that. I think part of that as I implied is a rice bowl question for generals. If they lost their division, would they no longer be a general! So within the military one had a sense that there was a strong defense being waged against what one might call the simplification, reordering and reform of the military from the side of the generals. It was also interesting that we had an inordinately difficult time in helping with defense conversion, in part



because the Russians wanted to run the defense conversion as a state enterprise. They wanted to be in charge and presumably use the process to make money for themselves.

*Q: We are talking about industrial?*

PICKERING: Industrial conversion.

*Q: Tanks and now turned to refrigerators.*

PICKERING: into tractors and then to build refrigerators. One of the ideas was, as a defense conversion activity, to take some defense installations and either set up or convert existing location into prefabricated housing. Housing was very short because troops were coming back from Eastern Europe and there was no place for them and their families to live. Russia had a lot of building materials. While wood was not the preferred alternative, it was certainly possible to do this and we had some successful examples of private Americans actually engaging with Russian partners in prefabricated wooden housing, modern kind of American style wooden housing, on the outskirts of Moscow and in certain parkland or certain open land areas which were up for development. But we were never able to get past the organizing principal with the Russians that our folks didn't want to put our kind of money into defense conversion run by former generals along military lines, for all the obvious reasons. They were unwilling to think about other forms of organization or other methods of organization to make that happen. So this kind of, well not Mexican standoff, but Moscow standoff, plagued this issue for long periods of time. I don't think in my whole time -- and I don't think ever since -- we ever got a break through where in fact we were able to work with AID money, or even U.S. DOD money for that matter, in taking a defense installation and converting it to something that had a really useful civilian purpose.

It was fascinating, however, at that time that you could see some of the civilian products of self-conversion were available in the Izmailovo open-air market, for example, for a long period of time. You could buy very high quality optical glass ashtrays. Obviously they came from a defense industry somewhere, that kind of thing.

*Q: I could see a certain attraction and yet clash of...Americans love to metal and we know how to do these things. We are actually very good at this but at the same time coming up against the Russian soul and spirit and all this, you know coming in and saying, "Look, let me tell you what to do." I watched this in Germany by the way after World War II, I was a vice counsel and all these Germans who left during the Hitler time came back and afterwards after the currency reform to tell their former compatriots how to run things and they found they didn't get very far.*

PICKERING: They didn't get very far at all. There were not a large, but still a significant number of young Americans of Russian extraction, often with the language, who came back, and some successfully for a while, started banks and other things. Most of them like non-Russian speakers and non-Russians, Americans with no Russian antecedents who also came over to start businesses -- they were quickly squeezed out. In essence they would whomp up a partner because Russian law required it and dealing with Russia you needed some element of partnership to get through the bureaucracy and everything. The partner would often turn out after a year to be

in close cahoots with the local government, after all how could he have gotten to be a partner? Through the operation of perverse regulation, sometimes introduced especially for the purpose, the American would suddenly find himself out of the partnership, his investment fully in and the hands of the Russian partner operating it for him. Then the American's only option was to pack his bag and go home. This was, of course, very disturbing but pretty typical of what happened in that period.

I always used to say to American investors in this kind of activity that you had three areas where you had to know people particularly well if you wanted to be successful investing in Russia: your partner, the local government up to the regional level and the federal government. Once you had a very strong feel that, you had those well in hand and well ordered, you then had some opportunity for a life-long investment. But those were very rare and very few American ever had that kind of confidence or capacity. We were often approached by members of Congress on behalf of Americans who had gone through this process, many of them before any of us had a chance even to warn them, almost unknown they went in off on their own and did these things. There was also, of course, a kind of iron rule that the bigger you were the more chance you had to succeed and the smaller you were the more chance you had to go under.

One of the interesting things that the Russian partners never figured out quite was that in some of these cases the real success of the business depended upon exports in a market where the American partner really had a strong grip and where the Russian partner was not capable of replicating that kind of information and influence. Those were the reasonably lucky ones that figured out very early that each of the sides brought indispensability to the success of the venture. But often the Russians would follow the pattern that the Russians followed when they took over Russian industry They would go through asset stripping and then sell that off. Accumulate that in their personal wealth and then move on either to a new Russian asset or to another partnership where they could obviously make money doing the same thing. They made a lot of money very quickly in this way.

*Q: What was your view or the embassy's view of the Oligarchs and this sudden explosion of Russian style entrepreneurs? I mean was this just a phase they had to go through or could something be done about it?*

PICKERING: Well it was interesting. Nobody that I dealt with thought that it was enviable that the Russians had to go through this period, but as you know, they are still in it.

Q: Yeah.

PICKERING: And to some extent it comes from first the notion that when Communism collapsed there were no rules for the operation of an open market. Now Adam Smith would tell you by definition there should be no rules. But we all know, in fact, that a successful operation of capitals economies depends very heavily on government ruling making and regulation. They don't depend so much on what the Soviets saw which was the governments producing goods and services. So as the Russian economy shifted from the government production of goods and services, it was suddenly one day a complete prohibition against private enterprise and suddenly the next day there was full permission for private enterprise with no set of balancing rules and

regulations. These covered meeting health requirements or dealing with their labor or, you know, how to operate in the market or whether trusts were or were not possible, whether prohibited market practices, strong arm enforcement or anything should be outlawed. So in effect you went from total prohibition to Wild West overnight. Russians are not dumb and the most successful are smart as hell and learned how to take advantage of all of this, including the fact that they learned all the tricks and invented new ones in order to amass large amounts of personal wealth to build their fortunes.

Now some of them were really rapacious and always stayed rapacious, they only cared about personal fortunes and most of those guys fell off the wagon, they were not capable of converting rapaciousness into repetitive aspects of economic endeavor that made things go. Others were less so. Some even, like Mr. Khodorkovsky, were converted on the road to Damascus to a more open and enlightened practice and so Mr. Khodorkovsky, quite famous at least in terms of his publicity, and I think his actions, tried to move to open boards, work with reasonable governments, a lot of transparency, participation of successful entrepreneurs in the charitable part of the economy and all the rest. He, of course, suffered for it. He grew to have political ambitions and to some extent they crossed over where Mr. Putin thought he ought to be. So he ran up against the one hard barrier at that point in Russia, which was government interest. In a sense a lot of these folks were very successful because they pandered to, supported, some even controlled government interest. It is said that Mr. Putin's big problem with the two leading Oligarchs he cause to move away, Mr. Berezovsky and Mr. Gusinsky, was that between them they controlled most of Russia's TV, In controlling most of Russia's TV, they made or broke Boris Yeltsin. Boris Yeltsin, in return, did favors for them to help them improve their oligarchic activities while at the same time they did favors for him to help him improve his political success. So Mr. Putin saw that back scratching was dangerous because it put him in a position, perhaps newer to the scene when he came on and less strong than Mr. Yeltsin, to be prisoners of the oligarchs rather than to function in a mutually balanced system or indeed as Putin prefers to control the process.

So part of the past history of the ten years or so of Mr. Putin has been whether he will be controlled by or actually control the oligarchic element in Russia. He has used all the state power and all of his positions to assert his control over them rather than the other way around. In the meantime, the Russians have begun to pass laws regulating business, but it's not in my view necessarily too far still from the Wild West. There are more obligations of responsibility and in the end in Russia having no rules to run the economy, meant that the government could do what it wanted. It was not bound by a rule of law in the way it could use all the elements of state power and all of the traditional activities say of the intelligence and security agencies to put pressure on the oligarchs. It meant the development in Russia of what has come to be called "kompromat" material which puts the individual in an embarrassing, invidious or totally blackmailable position. That is what all Russian leaders try to get on everybody so they can have their way in dealing with issues. But they could also use the perversion of the prosecutorial system which was after all still in the early aftermath of Communism very much a Communist arrangement. It meant that the chief individual in the judicial system was the prosecutor and the judges and all the attorneys and everybody else followed his lead.

That's the way in which Communist law operated and that's the way in which individuals were subject to the so-called Rule of Law or the Law of Rule, maybe in Russia. A lot of that hung over into the days of Yeltsin and Putin. Yeltsin for his part tried to break some of that down and saw in fact that judicial reform could play a role and a lot of westerners were pushing hard to make that happen. You had some enlightened judges, but you had many judges obviously who preferred the old system. It was better for them, they did better under the old system, they made more money, they prospered, they had fewer problems and all the rest. But all of these things I think played a role in this transition period.

It was clear that Mr. Putin has seen long since I was there that a lot of this from his perspective has gone too far, so he's engaged and has been in recentralizing.

*Q: With the Oligarchs they were running wild when you were there or had they started?*

PICKERING: No, there at the beginning at the period when in effect there were few limits on their power. They exercised, as I said, a great deal of influence over President Yeltsin and his bureaucracy. Putin didn't want that.

It is worth looking at the oligarchs. Some of them had been in effect fixers under the Soviet system. As such they had close relationships with the internal elements of the KGB. They provided the unofficial means for assuring that industrial establishments got raw materials and spare parts when the Gosplan allocations of such did not function effectively to make that happen. Many industries were vertically integrated and provided in one plant for the materials and processes necessary to make end products. However, even there some outside dependence was necessary. The fixers located the material and spare parts and arranged for a price to have it moved to the plant they were serving that needed it.

They were perfectly placed in the system to become oligarchs. They knew where the good factories were located. Understood who had control of raw materials. They knew where sell offs could produce profits for them. They jumped on the bandwagon of buying for kopeks on the ruble the 10 ruble vouchers given to every worker with the idea of stimulating ownership in industry. They accumulated large amounts of the vouchers which they used to privatize industry, sell off assets or convert the industry to production in the domestic economy.

One of the things that happened when I was there was the use of a way of financing Yeltsin's success during the 1996 election which clearly created problems and more. The government under Anatoly Chubais, who was one of their premier reformers, went into a "one-time arrangement" with the oligarchs. In return for loans to the government used to finance the election, they got valuable shares in government-owned enterprises. It was called 'Loans for Shares' and, of course, you can imagine where the loan money ended up, in the electoral campaign for sure. Certainly they were unwise to spend it anywhere else. They wanted, felt they had to, move Yeltsin from single digit popularity in January to success in the election in June. They saw the alternative as return of the communists under Zyuganov.

*Q: Well now one of the attributes of a successful diplomat in the country is to know where the power is. So you as the American ambassador what did you do about the powerful Oligarchs?*

PICKERING: Well I had an opportunity to get to see them, certainly not very much to influence them. They were very standoffish and a lot of them kept themselves at some distance because they knew or assumed we were not supporters. But it was interesting that while I was there some had become incorporated into the government directly. Mr. Potanin had become deputy prime minister. As part of my role in knowing the Russian government, knowing the players I tried to go around and see these people, talk to them, get a sense of what their views were and where they were headed. Well, a lot of them aren't particularly enlightening. Some of them weren't particularly enlightened about where they were doing on reforms and so forth, but it was one of the principal issues that we had to deal with.

*Q: Was much of the money as say in Hong Kong where some of the big money earners there made sure they had an equivalent to a green card or were investing in property in the United States? Was this going on?*

PICKERING: Russia when I first got there was heavily afflicted by inflation. A good part of people's savings and otherwise went quickly into foreign currency, especially dollars. So it was a very heavy dollarization of Russia, maybe \$30-40 billion worth of U.S. currency in circulation in Russia. Things were sold and traded for in dollars. It wasn't until the ruble reform, I guess at the beginning of 1994, when the Russian clamped down on this and made it harder for people to trade in dollars. They revalued the ruble and dropped three zeros off it so it became a currency that one could use to deal. They took steps to slow and stop inflation before they revalued the ruble. You then didn't have to carry a lot of dollars to make things happen but credit cards were not honored, checks were not worth anything, so cash, rubles and dollars were still king. Of course these folks saved dollars. The oligarchs in particular moved money out of Russia very easily, their positions allowed them to do that and they developed huge offshore bank accounts. They reinvested their money into more stable activities all across the western world. It was true that Russian oligarchs controlled a very large amount of money outside of Russia. Those who didn't get their money out of Russia -- whenever the time came to do them in -- the Russian state took their money as they did with Mr. Khodorkovsky. This was a threat and it was a control device. I don't know how much he was successful in getting out, but he took the view that he should reinvest in Russia and develop the oil business that he had put together and make that prosper. So in a sense he was the victim of his own good intentions as well as perhaps his own sloppiness about where he drew the line between a business and politics.

*Q: With the Oligarchs controlling so much of the media was the media friendly toward the United States or were we working on that particular angle?*

PICKERING: Well we worked on it. I would say that the media has become more unfriendly which reflects the growth in more serious problems between Russia and the United States, but we went through ups and downs. Don't forget the Russian media at this time was imminently biddable; the easiest way to get a favorable story was to go and pay somebody in the press to write one. We were not in a position to do that. Others did and if they had anti-American views it was easy to get an anti-American story in the Russian press. You generally knew who took money by what they wrote. When we approached them they said look I have to make a living,

you know how it is. I cannot stop writing those stories but I would be happy to be helpful to you on exactly the same basis, cash for good stories.

*Q: Well who would be doing that at the time?*

PICKERING: Russian nationalists, Mr. Zhirinovsky, the communists in Russia, some of our foreign competition from time to time. At that point we were much more closely cooperating with the Europeans. The Europeans wanted obviously to get their share in publicity. How they got it was their own business, I didn't intervene in that but you know I spent my time off and on giving interviews, speaking on television every opportunity I got to try to continue to promote what our interests were, how we were aligned with where Russia was going and what we were attempting to do to help.

We had an AID program that was in my view also afflicted with a combination of serious difficulties. We had a lot of people who had grown up in the developing world of Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia whose general knowledge about Russia was very rudimentary particularly at the beginning. There was a lack of knowledge about how to work with the Russian bureaucracy, what kind of programs would make sense and how the state regulatory structure functioned. Few if any spoke Russian. It meant in fact that to do anything required an inordinate amount of time and a fantastic amount of checking and rechecking, not that anything was wrong with due diligence, at the same time we still made mistakes. We invested a lot of money in a Harvard activity, where we very clearly, much after the fact, found that the individuals involved in running this, all of whom were thought to be personally disinterested and honest people with all the best ideas about how to develop the Russian economy, were using their wives to invest their own money in Russian securities in their private interest. The decisions on securities to buy reflected their own insider information as a result of the program they were contracted to run by AID.

On the other hand, we had very close links between the Russian macroeconomic policy makers and the US treasury department. Those were generally beneficial. Larry Summers was first assistant secretary and then undersecretary of treasury for international affairs before he became secretary. He and his colleagues spent time on the phone with serious Russians and came over from time to time to try to help them organize their macro-economic management -- of their currency, economy and financial opportunities in Russia. I thought their policy advice was beneficial. So you had many different lines going on and it was almost impossible at any one time to keep the embassy totally on top of all of it. We had a very good treasury attaché who played a very useful role in the economic team in helping us understand what treasury was doing and with his assessment of changing economic factors in Russia.

I found it particularly hard, however, as the ambassador to feel that the AID effort was fully integrated and to understand where we were headed. There were differences between AID ideas over those of others in my economic team at the embassy. They took a somewhat different view about where we should be going in economic development. But anything took a long, long time to put in place at AID, whatever it was.

*Q: Well what about all these advisors from various universities and elsewhere? This was sort of new found land in a way it seemed to be people with bright ideas in the United States they flocked to Russia to...*

PICKERING: Well some did. I think a few had some successes but not too many. I think the Russians own intense feeling of nationalism and their desire to maintain charge of their own future kept these folks from becoming a kind of overwhelming wild horse bucking its way through the Russian bureaucracy. So in a sense I guess the lament may have been not that some of their ideas were accepted, but maybe fewer of their ideas were accepted than should have been in the long term. Maybe in the short term people did more experimentation, but there was also a tremendous amount going on out in the countryside outside of Moscow -- much of it heavily controlled by the local governors. Over a period of time, they had become elected along with local legislatures and became in effect local satraps. Many of them used their position as they would have under communism to assure that nothing went on that they didn't control and that all or much of the economic activity in their province was under their control. For some, they or their wife, or their wife's business, benefited through this economic control. There were not scrupulous standards of ethical conduct in place and many of the governors developed partnerships with Americans, some with dubious reputations. Europeans also worked to get special relationships set up. In the meantime, you had large American businesses moving in.

When I was there I think a few months before I left, Coca Cola flew in 22 bottling plants in very large Russian airplanes (AN-124), set them up in buildings that had been built for them in various places in Russia to start the Coca Cola-ization of Russia. Previously Pepsi, beginning under the communists, had enjoyed a monopoly American soft drink relationship in the country.

Mars, the famous American candy company, began by getting special arrangements and customs duties to import large quantities of its candy bars. But in keeping with the commitment it made. it did build a fully self-sustaining separate plant in a region outside of Moscow to produce its own products;. It fought the battle of getting raw materials and other things in. It was a very modern and very effective plant.

When McDonald's came in they decided that what they had to do to maintain quality was almost all of the processing of everything they had was kept in a central location rather than parceling it out to contractors and insisting they meet McDonald standards -- a Moscow central supply operation. I think later they were vindicated because when I was there they may have had seven or eight restaurants in Moscow, by the time I left in '96, they have some 70 all over Russia. Obviously the centralized arrangement allowed them to do centrally what they would otherwise have depended on contractors from many other countries to be able to do because that capability didn't exist in Russia.

*Q: How did we view Yeltsin at the time?*

PICKERING: Yeltsin was without doubt was becoming an increasingly controversial person. Because of the early relationship I talked about which Yeltsin developed beginning in Vancouver with Clinton it was a Yeltsin-Clinton relationship. Yeltsin would see other people but rarely. Occasionally Vice President Gore did, a couple of times Strobe came over and had an

opportunity to meet with Yeltsin and once or twice Warren Christopher met with Yeltsin when he was secretary. But it was not something that Yeltsin did often. Yeltsin was like a lot of presidents of large continental countries, they spend the bulk of their time on domestic issues and rarely, if ever, meet foreign diplomats; one only has to take the White House as an example of that.

On the other hand, if you are in a small country and many of the countries I served in were reasonably small and you are the American ambassador you might see the head of state two or three times a week. So the Yeltsin position was very different and I saw him very rarely, often with other visitors. I saw Prime Minister Chernomyrdin much more often and he was available to me. I saw other ministers and deputy prime ministers but it was interesting and that was the way in which the country operated and that was the way Mr. Yeltsin operated.

Over a period of time, Yeltsin was constantly full of surprises for us. He would signal in advance often when he did so. In fact in 1993, when he set up the conditions for dismissing the parliament and having new elections that led to the confrontation over the occupation of the Russian White House by the parliament, he had Foreign Minister Kozyrev meet with the US, UK, French and German Ambassadors to tell us what he planned. The inability on his part to stop their incessant modification and changing of the constitution on one hand and his interest in moving the process toward reform on the other, led to a stalemate and even worse. We met the foreign minister late in the afternoon on a day late in September before the crisis broke out. The foreign minister said very clear this was what the president is going to do. He is going to throw out the parliament and send it home, but we will have elections in December and this is not going to be easy. We expect it's going to be very, very tough, but the president is committed, he's going to persevere and the president would appreciate your and your country's support for moving ahead. This is why we are telling you in advance that this is the way in which we are intending to go. We all expressed support generally based on the commitment to hold early elections for a new parliament, even as we informed our capitals.

My view was that one could have been a slavish adherent of excessive legalism in Russia. But it was all based on the old communist structure and the old communist constitution with all its peculiar arrangements from the democratic perspective. Or one could have said, "OK, this is an opportunity for change, we've got to support Yeltsin." My view all along was Yeltsin wasn't Thomas Jefferson or George Washington. But he's trying to create revolutionary change inside a hugely difficult bureaucracy in a situation where our former largest enemy is now about to try and move in a direction that makes that confrontation much less dangerous. We could see a chance for a more benign future, less contentious, ideological, and why shouldn't we support him? He was doing things that in the Russian system were not going to be completely legal, but nevertheless this was one where if we had stuck to strict Soviet legality given the way in which the legal structure had been organized we would have ended with a disaster. If we had stayed with Yeltsin we might well find our way through the process.

I can remember in the morning after the shooting that took place Sunday night October 3<sup>rd</sup> a phone call with Strobe. Washington was at that point preoccupied by the disaster in Somalia, but which I hardly heard about. Strobe called me and said, "What's your recommendation? Do we support Yeltsin?" I said, "Strobe, it's a no brainer. We have no other alternative in this situation



as difficult as it is.” He said, “Well, that’s not completely clear from here.” I said, “Well, it is from here. Use my name, if you need to. But this is the direction in which we have to go. The fact is that the guy has said he will go to elections, it is an extremely important basis for supporting him even if we don’t actually have the Russian constitution entirely on our side.” And that’s what we did.

As I noted previously, some officers in the Embassy disagreed at a much later point with this approach.

*Q: Did we do anything during this confrontation?*

PICKERING: We made statements, which were supportive of Yeltsin, yes. There were several interesting aspects of our role there. At one point, on Saturday evening, I think about mid-evening, the parliamentary opposition came to the embassy gate and one of the political officers who knew some of them went out and talked to them. Our building was just across the street from the white house -- the parliament. And at that point all the Russian para-military police presence which had been there had left after the firing started in the late afternoon of October 3<sup>rd</sup>. They said that they wanted to establish contacts with the government and they weren’t able to do so and could we help them.

*Q: Who is they?*

PICKERING: The folks in the Russian White House who were in effect the rebels and so we made contacts for them and put them in touch. We said that we would not take a role in this, but that if we could help establish contacts and if both sides were willing we would do so. We understand that there were talks back and forth, not very fruitful ones because the Russian government then was in a position of deciding whether it was going to treat with these people and deal with compromises or take back the White House. They decided that they were going to take back the White House. They had the troops and the capability of doing that.

*Q: Did you get...did you feel under any threat or anything at that time or was this something that was happening and we were more observers?*

PICKERING: No, we were in a very difficult position. We were right across the street from the Russian White House. When it started I was at home at Spaso House, and I was sitting in my study on the second floor on Sunday afternoon catching up on some work. I could look right down the street where Spaso House is at the end and see the Garden Ring Boulevard. Suddenly, I heard this roar from the Garden Ring and saw police with aluminum shields running across the opening of my street and people following them in the direction of the Embassy and the White House. So I called the embassy right away and I said, “You got a mob headed down your way. I suspect it’s going to go toward the mayor’s office and the parliament building. Do what you can to button up.” They did and they moved our people to safety. We had 147 housing units above ground right across the street from this -many of them facing right on the street. They put all our people below ground level. Happily they had built the embassy in Moscow with a basement gymnasium, a swimming pool and a shopping center below ground level. So they went down there and took refuge in the gym. We got all of our people out; they did a superb job in about 15

or 20 minutes before the shooting started. Then the shooting started with a vengeance in that area. My RSO with a couple of Marines, of course, was standing out and watching and was on the phone to me and I said, "You guys better get the hell out of there."

We had a policeman shot at our gatehouse. They took him off, happily, we didn't have to care for him, but we took a couple of the other Russian police gate guards in to give them shelter because they were being subjected to armed attack by people with weapons in the white house. By 5:00 in the afternoon with all the shooting and the mayor's office across the street which was the parliamentary office building these guys who had been doing the shooting chased off what was a large unit interior ministry troops from the Felix Dzerzhinsky division -- para-military police who had been surrounding the white house for a number of days. The armed unit surrounding the white house was pulled out and so we were outside, no longer protected by the perimeter had been between us and the white house. Then the rebels all loaded themselves into the trucks of the Felix Dzerzhinsky division and drove north 4 or 5 kilometers and started to attack the main TV station at Ostankino in north Moscow. When that was happening, the shooting all shifted up toward the TV and I called the embassy and said, "Well, I'm not doing any good over here, I will come over." I walked over. I knew how to go through back streets and allies and around my district. There was a tunnel under the Garden Ring to get to the embassy. I said, "Why don't you meet me at the end of the tunnel and we'll go in and I'll stay at the embassy. At least I'll be in a position to be in touch with all of you."

So that went well. Then some of my folks came to me and said, "Well we'd really like to evacuate all of our families, this is a very messy situation." I said, "Well, I'm not sure you are going to get anywhere, how can we organize this to get to the airport?" We looked at it and I said, "Well, give me a plan for what you think you are going to do." Well by that time things had become so bad out by the television station that I said, "No, we are going to stay here overnight and we'll stay here together. We are as protected as we are going to be." So we did that and rested there until the next day. But we spent a lot of time briefing people about what was happening and where things were going. Obviously there were numbers of staff caught outside the embassy. I said to those we could contact, "Go to Spaso House, we are going to need you because we will be the only embassy in town that won't know what's going on outside of this compound that we are holed up in here." So some of our political officers settled at Spaso, monitored television, walked the streets where it was safe and reached out to contacts. There was some shooting, apparently snipers and others from tall buildings overlooking Spaso House in the neighborhood. I said, "Well don't go out obviously and take any risks of getting sniped at while you are there, but do what you can to stay in touch and use the phones and obviously settle in there, if you need to." So we had maybe four or five political officers and other people who could operate on the outside and kept us informed about what was going on. We were in touch with other friendly embassies as well while we were semi-cut off on the inside.

Moscow television and CNN which had locations across the street from the white house on the other side and in one of the Stalin buildings -- Barrikadnaya -- overlooking the district with good views of the white house and our embassy were great sources on real time information. I had turned on CNN as soon as I had seen the crowd chase the policeman down the Garden Ring. They were people sympathetic with the parliamentary group who had for a week or more been

demonstrating in front of the Foreign Ministry also located in the area several blocks from Spaso House and the Embassy.

The next morning, Russian troops used APCs driving down a small road next to the Embassy attacked the white house and entered. At the same time, in front of CNN, a contingent of tanks (T-72s?) were being loaded from trucks with ammunition. Two moved forward into a bridge over the Moscow River which was perfectly sited to overlook the front of the white house and began firing. We could feel the ground shake under the Embassy. They aimed and put rounds into several front windows in the upper stories of the building which caused fires to start inside. Because the rounds did not seem to explode on impact, the damage was only immediately around the windows. The fire spread and caused the blackening of parts of the structure. We assumed they were using some form of inert or training ammunition in order to hold down damage to the building and those inside.

Later in the morning, we had a Marine shot in the neck and we had the help of the Embassy's Russian physician to evacuate him in an armored ambulance out of the back of the embassy. We had a policeman shot on our doorstep who I think was OK but we never were told the result. We had Americans, one killed and one very badly injured, who were covering the fighting around the TV station.

Our Marine was hit looking through an open window on the then unfinished new Embassy tower. I had called the Marines down from that position about a quarter of an hour before. A second Marine was with him and helped treat the wound which was close to the jugular. He was taken to the Kremlin clinic where they did an excellent job in closing the wound. The wounded American from the TV station fighting was a photographer working for the New York Times. He was saved by Russians who went out on to an open plaza at the TV station and brought him to safety. He too was taken to the Kremlin clinic with heavy chest wounds and very well treated. I went by to see both men two days later and have stayed in touch with the photographer over the years since.

*Q: Yeah, but there was a lot of smoke though.*

PICKERING: The tank firing started fires and the whole building burned. By the next morning it was clear that big areas of this building were still on fire and we watched on TV but, of course. The troops attacking the white house came right by our gate. The Russians in armored personnel carriers came down a small alley by our street rolled out onto the park behind the White House and right up to the steps of the building and then discharged their troops to go into the building. They eventually chased the people out of the building who interestingly enough a lot of them went down and out underground. There were underground passages in Moscow and other escape ways so they got out of the building, but many were arrested and taken out. So by the afternoon of Monday, the thing was pretty well over. I was able by Monday noon to get in my armored Cadillac and go over to the residence and make sure everything was alright over there. We took some more people out to help with the reporting from outside our compound.

But while this was going on there were crowds of people standing on this bridge with tanks firing into the building, it was completely lunatic and some were hit.

*Q: Were we concerned with over repression as this was winding down?*

PICKERING: No, interestingly enough they had trials. People were put in jail but not wildly so. Some people who probably should have been put in were let go, so they didn't conduct an extensive purge. As I said earlier, the communists were worried that because they were involved there would be retribution against them. They split the party into the Agrarian Party and the Communist Party to see if they could get some protection by doing that, but Yeltsin was pretty open. The Russians were shocked at the fighting. They hadn't seen anything like that since the Second World War and that was an aggression -- or since the civil war in the early twenties -- which was such a horrible period of time in Russia. Almost every Russian wanted to forget it and never repeat it again. So there was, I think, a shock effect that set in.

The December elections didn't produce a victory for Yeltsin interestingly enough. I think in part because of some of the shock effect of this event. The Russians like, I think, two things in a leader -- strong authority and order. This was an event that showed Yeltsin weak and vacillating in terms of what he was actually going to do about it. The stories were that they had a tough decision in the Kremlin figuring out how they were going to use the military to retake the place. They had a lot of discussion about that but that whoever prevailed; maybe it was Defense Minister Grachev who was close to Yeltsin who made a difference.

*Q: This is Tape 18, Side 1, with Tom Pickering. Well in the aftermath how did we view this?*

PICKERING: We in effect took a view that Yeltsin had done under serious provocation the right thing. We put a lot of stake in the fact that he was committed and later carried out elections for a new Duma and went through a process of constitutional reform to give Russia a constitution that was liberal and reformed as opposed to communism and statist approaches. Those things I think helped. I think to some extent Mr. Zhirinovskiy who was coming up with a kind of ultra-nationalist party benefited in part by this because it was not clear over all that public opinion was totally for Mr. Yeltsin. But the majority was and he managed to hold on. We, and others, did what we could to assist him from outside which was limited in recognizing that he had a particularly tough and difficult solely domestic issue to deal with.

*Q: OK, we will end here and we will pick this up the next time. I would like to ask a question I can't help asking, what was the role of the French during all this time you were there because they often take, from the American perspective, it's a contrary view and I suppose they have an opposite view of that, but also any others. The Germans, were other European countries looking to play roles there? I mean was this an opportunity? Then also the relations with the other inside countries, the former Soviet Bloc countries, and nuclear disarmament and all of that?*

PICKERING: Well there are a whole lot of those issues.

*Q: Great.*

*Q: Today is the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.*

PICKERING: We were talking the last time about Russia and you had asked first the question about the French, which I think, is interesting. Certainly the French role was much more congenial in 1990 with respect to Iraq than it was in 2003, 2002. To some extent I think it related to the differences in circumstances. The circumstances in 1990 were an unprovoked Iraqi aggression against Kuwait with the shaping fairly quickly of a limited objective, which was the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait. In 2003 it was obviously an American-led invasion of Iraq with the idea of toppling the government of Saddam Hussein -- seemingly to put in place a replacement democratic government of sorts. But there were uncertainties about that. ...

*Q: Are we talking about I think we, aren't we in Moscow at this point?*

PICKERING: Oh are we? I thought we...

*Q: I think we are back...*

PICKERING: We are in Moscow...so let me go back and leave that all aside and just say we are in Moscow and the French in Moscow were quite different. The French ambassador in Moscow for my whole period, I think was Pierre Morel, who had been foreign affairs advisor at the Quai, and was close to Mitterrand. The general sharing the views particularly among the western four, France, Germany, the UK and U.S. was a long established Moscow institution. We tried not to flaunt it with anyone else. It was an arrangement that set up regular meetings of the four ambassadors. I forget, but I think I don't think the deputies attended it except in the absence of one of the Ambassadors. We met once a week. It was a very frank exchange of views on what was happening in the current situation. The French had some, as I remember, some interesting contacts and as a result always some interesting things to say. Pierre was a Russian speaker as was his wife who was of Russian background. They had been married in the orthodox church of St John Warrior across the street from the French Embassy. The meeting and the value of the meetings tended a lot to depend on the personalities and the capabilities of the ambassadors. That meant that Morel who had been there before and whose wife also had been a diplomat, her contacts too enhanced the range of activities that the French pursued in Moscow. I don't believe that over the course of three and a half years and a large number of meetings we ever had deep differences of opinion and that included all the others.

Similarly, the German's had two ambassadors while I was there, both extremely capable. The first when I arrived had been there for many years and was very experienced and an extremely close follower of things Russian and had some Russian experience in his background. His replacement did not, but he was an equally capable, very professional German ambassador. My British colleagues Brian Fall and his successor Allan Wood both had extremely extensive Russian experience and were Russian speakers. They too were also therefore valuable in the meetings. Generally speaking we met mainly on the issues of the week, although occasionally we met bilaterally on other questions. But the whole focus and feeling in Moscow at the time was to share views frankly in a wide range of fields. This was a new era. The old style analysis was no longer very valuable. New and good Russian contacts were just beginning to open up and the tight control of the Soviets beginning to fall away. We were engaged in a life and death struggle over relationships with the Russian, although it was very clear that as things evolved, the Europeans were being courted at times by Moscow -- in part because the Russians played it that

way, and there was a little bit of question over who was going to be in effect maybe the closest to the Russians or who was going to be the most influential. Those issues never influenced in my view the frankness and directness of our conversations.

Without doubt during my time, which was the first part of the Clinton administration with President Clinton newly arrived on the scene, put the United States in a very powerful position. We probably did more in terms of funding, did more in terms of close personal relationships, than the others. Clinton had a large number of meetings with Yeltsin a couple times a year at least. We had set up the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission which over a period of time meant that Vice President Gore met fairly frequently with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. They were able to carry forward a whole series of bilateral relationships. The commission in effect consisted of Russian and American cabinet officers from various departments -- from Health and Human Services right through to Energy, a wide range of them including Defense and, of course, Foreign Affairs. It meant that we set up a set of cooperative relationships; space, of course, was clearly prominent and many others in which we had an ongoing agenda. We developed projects and pursued them and implemented them. A large share of these were designed to provide an opportunity for Russia to get on its feet economically.

*Q: Was there with the ones you mentioned and maybe I don't know if the Japanese, Chinese played a role, but was there a feeling of 'Gee, here's a pretty good market that we might want to get into before the others do?' I mean was that...?*

PICKERING: Well there was competition for markets and Russia was always there. I think that a large number of Americans aware, attracted very early on, with the fall of communism to the Russian market. Russia was seen as shaving considerable natural resources although, as you know, the economy from the fall of communism went way down hill. For a short time, it became an economy the size of Netherlands or even Hungary. The Russians were not able rapidly to move from all those restrictions of communism to the more free and open market. Some people, Russians and foreigners, tried to take advantage of their lack of regulation for short term gain. The lack of regulation which happened once communism collapsed -- everything was prohibited, and suddenly everything was permitted and there were no rules about it and that made this possible. To some extent this enabled a large number of Russians of clever disposition, as I noted earlier, to buy cheaply government provided vouchers and take positions in companies at very low prices and then to strip the assets and sometimes actually to put the companies back to work if they thought they could make them profitably. But they amassed large amounts of money through this process. As a result they became very prominent. Some of them looked for western partners. Other westerners came in, some very small and found it very difficult to deal in Russian because of their lack of size, their lack of knowledge of what was going on in Russian and sometimes unreliable Russian partners who tended to team up with government officials in the local region for a takeover. Naiveté was not an inapt synonym for what was going on and it was a very tough place to do business. The bigger you were the more you could look after yourself and obviously the more due diligence you could afford before you got in bed with a partner who might deprive you of your resources.

*Q: What about Christian missionaries? Were they a thorn in your side or anything?*

PICKERING: Not really, although a number showed up. You had in Russia the Baptists who had been there for some time and who had worked even in Soviet days and had achieved a fairly respected position. From time to time I had an opportunity to meet with them. The American Evangelical's who came over I think almost saw this as a completely new area of mission work and frightened the Russian Orthodox church immensely because of seemingly large amounts of money they could bring to support their work, to use television, rent large stadiums. The Orthodox Patriarch, Alexei, complained to me about the evangelicals along these lines and that they took advantage of hunger on the part of some the Russians who had returned to the orthodox religion. But it was clear when I was there that the Russian Orthodox church was by far the most respected institution in the country, in part I think because of persecution and deprivation under the communists., It attempted through a very, very difficult time under Stalin and the early communist days to hang on and managed to, but barely by its finger tips. But the Russians, the Soviets even, were never able to divorce the close relationship that had existed between the Tsarist state and the Russian Orthodoxy. To some Russians even today the definition of the state is, of course, Orthodoxy, and the close relationship between religion -while under Communism, post-communism, it never became a state religion. Under post-communism it became a kind of protected religion. I used to see the Patriarch frequently and he was always interesting because he had comments on many things that were going on and his complaint about foreign missionary activity was fairly serious. He was happy with the relationship with some of the churches that had established themselves in close relationship with the Russian Orthodox church even in the days of communist persecution and kept up that relationship but didn't in effect send people to Russia to save souls at the expense of the Russian Orthodox church.

By 1994 and afterward the church was repossessing its property from the state. Many of the churches that Stalin hadn't had time or the inclination to destroy because they had been converted into state property in Moscow, were returned to church control, sometimes gradually over a period of time. That meant that the church was gradually assuming a function in life and society and in trying to determine moral values and develop preaching and begin the process of organizing church services and public work with the church.

As you probably know, in the late 1930s Stalin went after Moscow's 630 some churches to destroy them The a very large domed cathedral, which had been build to commemorate Russia's victory in the wars against Napoleon, had been destroyed by explosives in downtown Moscow. The church building site had been intended by Stalin to become the world's tallest skyscraper and home of the Supreme Soviet. The church took 49 years to build in large measure because for part of the time they had to drive pilings into the swampy soil alongside the Moscow River to support the foundations of the building. So when they destroyed the old church they found that the new site that they had created wouldn't take the weight of the new planned grandiose building without a very extensive preparation and the site was turned into a heated swimming pool, a large outdoor heated swimming pool. By '93, the mayor of Moscow, Yuriy Luzhkov, who saw a political opportunity in almost every move, was able to gather enough money and then sponsor the rebuilding of this huge cathedral. It went up in about three years. It was an amazing job and he put it all back together again.

By the time I left in '96, he had gilded the dome and I had attended a dedication inside. There was no interior decoration at the very start, but Yeltsin attended and the Patriarch officiated. It

took place in the late spring but on an extremely cold day. You went into this building, which was just all-raw brick on the inside and huge dome. In the direction of the altar (east) was a large icon and on both sides there were at an angle in the crossing of the church large stands, bleachers. On one side, on the left side as you faced the front of the church you had a choir of men who were obviously either seminarians who were newly meant to preach in the Russian church and on the right hand side you had a uniformed, Alexandrov chorus, the successor to the Red Army chorus.

*Q: Oh yes.*

PICKERING: ... Their director was from Soviet days and the music was absolutely stunning, of course.

*Q: Well it was wonderful those Russian bases...*

PICKERING: Beautiful bases and obviously it's all unaccompanied music, it was a cappella, and it was extremely interesting and quite moving service and not a terribly long one. Again, it was for the diplomats because you know the Russian church and their lack of chairs or pews.

*Q: Did you run across...the Mormon Church is very much an American manifestation...?*

PICKERING: No I didn't and if they were, they were keeping a very low profile. I didn't see much of them nor did I have any complaints about them at the time. Now with the deep concern about Roman Catholicism, particularly the Ukraine and as you probably know the Ukrainian church has been split several ways. One group still is adhering closely to the Moscow Patriarch and...

*Q: The Union church or something?*

PICKERING: Well then these to the Orthodox Church but then there are two...there is a split in the Ukrainian National church at least there was when I was there so it was in two pieces. Then particularly in western Ukraine and you always had for a long time a Uniate church which was set up by Rome in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, which follows all the Orthodox customs and liturgy, but has allegiance to Rome. It's known in the region as the Greek Catholic church as it is in the Middle East. It, of course, was of concern to the Russian Orthodox Church because it was seen as part of the competition with Rome. There were several Roman Catholic churches in Russia that were reestablished. They had been there under the Russian empire, churches mainly for Poles, Poland was incorporated as part of the empire, but a very catholic country, so that in Irkutsk in Siberia you had a red sandstone very western European, Polish church that while I was there was a propaganda center for the State. Later it was indicated that there some Roman Catholic priests who came back to far eastern Russia to work among the congregations there who were Catholic or nominally Catholic or Ukrainian Uniates -- Greek Catholics. So the Orthodox Church could vent its traditional concern. Of course, it was in competition with the Catholic Church for centuries, but new Russia gave it an opportunity once again to move close to the state.



*Q: Well did you see particularly the Orthodox Church playing any role? Here was Russia going through a real transformation and we were looking toward three things basically. One, not an aggressive military power and two, a democracy and three a capitalistic state with rules and all this. Did you see the...?*

PICKERING: No, I think that the approach to Russia in general terms was best summed up I suppose by Strobe Talbot. He thought that they should be a functioning integrated member of the international community and as a result adopt, accept the normal ways of doing things. But we also had a lot of respect for the fact that it would be very hard, that it would take a lot time and that it would be done on a Russian basis not on a western basis. Some US advisers tended to forget that, but the Russians constantly reminded them of the fact that they were in charge and that it was their country. Some Russians felt an obligation to the west. Because of the amounts of money that we were putting in and to some extent because of the role of the west in the demise of communism, they saw it in a different light. Among the Russians generally there was a small but well educated group that was younger, under 40-year olds, who understood a good bit about western economics and had a chance for a western economic education. They looked to the west and played a role. But it was a struggle.

The church tended to play its traditional role. It was strongly backing the Yeltsin government, but without pronouncing itself widely on particular policies or objectives. It was seen as having a solid relationship and existing leaders in Moscow whether it was Mayor Luzhkov or President Yeltsin. Yeltsin paid less attention to the church than Putin has. The previous Patriarch, Alexei, was suitably cautious in how he took stands that would in one way or another run against where the State was going as long as generally the State was not infringing upon or impairing the churches ability to operate openly throughout the country. The State had begun gradually to return property taken by the communists that belonged to the church. But the church was having a struggle to find seminarians, to get enough priests to man the buildings that they got back, to reach out to the population.

It was interesting, however, when I was there in the middle of the '90s the Russian church congregations were not exclusively women. They had begun to bring in some music and some young men attended so one saw that as part of the relaxation of the restrictions and change of the church.

*Q: Were we doing anything, one, monitoring as an embassy kind of what was going on in the seminaries and also establishing ties between the seminaries and you know there are seminaries in the United States?*

PICKERING: It was not our role but the American churches role to promote that relationship and some of them did. As you know, of course, there was a split in the Russian church, with the so-called White Church of the United States during communist days with its own leaders and hierarchy. There were still some remnants of Red Church influence. Over a period of time the Russians struggled with trying to bring the churches closer together. (In 2014 that had happened) In effect the issue of communism and the role of the church under communism was the major reason for the split, not an issue of church doctrine or theology.

*Q: They weren't crossing with two fingers or three fingers, that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: No, none of that. So to some extent there was deep concern. I went to a Russian provincial city where they complained strongly that the Germans in the war had taken an icon which later found its way into the hands of the American church. They would like to have it back in Russia. You know one of their most famous, historical and privileged icons. So they raise the issue through the Metropolitan from that area. He raised it with me when I visited. There was nothing I could do about it. It was a question of a transaction it may have involved some war time recovery of looted art issues but it was difficult because it had already been in the US courts I believe. The Russian church was doing resubmission of this it to take the recovery of the icon to the court.

As I had said, I found the Patriarch open to conversations and willing to see me quite frequently.. He was informative and interesting but obviously too well aware of the fact that he was closely watched

*Q: Yeah, well then moving over to a different subject what about the whole nuclear disarmament and what was going on in disarmament and the reconfiguring the armed forces? What was going on during the time you were there?*

PICKERING: Well in general we were looking at questions of whether we could deal with a series of issues. We had, of course, gone through with the Soviet major nuclear deal on Start and that was still pending in Congress for advice and consent to ratification. We were very alert to particularly the consequences NATO's enlargement, the question of balance in conventional forces in Europe and indeed an effort to try to accommodate the Russians to NATO enlargement in Europe through a series of steps that would involve some arms control and some arms limitation. Concurrently, but not exactly joined with that, we hoped to create a stronger structure for the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty arrangements CFE. We went with the Russians through a long period of difficult negotiations, particularly in respect to things like tank strength in the Caucasus, to find a mutual agreement on limitations. Under part of this, we assured them that we would not shift the bulk of NATO forces toward the east. At the same time they would reduce the very large force they had created, particularly on the flanks of the Soviet Union in areas that we considered to be especially sensitive -- Turkey and the Baltics and Norway. So that took a long time and involved a lot of negotiations. We talked further about other steps.

Previously, we had talked to them in the first Bush administration about participation in missile defense jointly. That came up from time to time but not with any serious effort in part because the Clinton administration was of a very mixed mind as to whether it should go into missile defense or not. They were uncertain as to whether it had any real value. The Russians were happy to see it sort of pass by because they had convinced themselves that it was not a good idea for them or for the west to be involved in missile defense. They were concerned that we would create such an enormous structure in missile defense that we would reverse the balance of the deterrence. We would have the ability to strike them first and through an effective missile defense program block or defeat their response. That would change the current security paradigm which depended on the capacity for mutually assured destruction to maintain the balance and the stability of the present relationship.

We were equally concerned by the Iranian nuclear program and that began to be a serious issue for discussion. By then, they had begun their interest in picking up the construction of the nuclear power reactor at Bushehr which the Germans had started. We had been successful in persuading the Germans not to continue construction. In addition, the French and the Germans and other Europeans had agreed with us generally on limiting arms sales to Iran, the Russians had not. So we had those two issues with the Russians which we continued to pursue. At several points during that period the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (MINATOM) became very active in promoting cooperation with Iran in the nuclear arena. We were concerned about the possibility of nuclear proliferation.

Minatom was a kind of independent, large fiefdom, hiring over a million people and having very, very large infrastructure in Russia, including some vertically integrated secret cities, that later came to light after the Cold War. Minatom had the full maintenance of the Russian military nuclear program as well a large number of people devoted to civilian nuclear activities. MINATOM from time to time would get up out a limb promising to provide the Iranians with what we consider to be highly sensitive technology. We had to go back to the Russians, to Yeltsin, and try to claw back against the provision of that material. At times the Russians flirted with the idea of providing enrichment, with providing heavy water reactors which would allow the Iranians to produce plutonium, widely useful for military programs and other kinds of sensitive activities which in our view were not essential for the civilian full cycle. But from the Iranian point of view it would give them full autonomy, not just to make an effective civilian energy-producing program but also to take the same technologies to move into the nuclear weapons area.

So our concerns with Iran were fairly stringent back then and our policy was very tough. We didn't want anybody involved with Iran on any nuclear issue of any kind whether it was civilian or military. We wanted to block allowing them to get into a position where they could use the civilian program as a way of shoe horning themselves into military capability.

*Q: Well on their arms business here they had developed very sophisticated fighter aircraft and other things, in a way they needed a market and were we trying to limit their market or were there places where you could say, "Sure, go ahead fellas?"*

PICKERING: Well in a way it was one of the few areas where they had marketable commodities to sell. They could do that because they were willing to sell to areas where the west denied its technology and its capability. That included North Korea, China and Iran. There were some areas where we took a less firm view so that Russian sales of modern military aircraft to China were something that we spent a lot less time trying to block than we did to the furnishing of modern arms to Iran.

In the end I think part way through my tenure we finally got the Russians to agree that they would have a cut off of provisions of new weapons to Iran. The Russians would provide us with a true accounting of what it was they were permitted by existing contract to deliver to Iran. That agreement went through, it was kept very quiet but it was an important agreement. Since then the Russians under Putin have said they are reneging on it and in part at least continued to provide

new materials to Iran. (As of 2014 it looks like they have stopped advanced weapons sales completely)

*Q: What about China? How did...what were the Russians doing about China at that time and what about what were we doing about their doing that?*

PICKERING: I think it was an extremely interesting question because the Russians were certainly schizophrenic about China. They were of two minds, much as they were in Soviet days. It was very clear that the Russians and the Chinese came to periods of disagreement in the late '50s and the early '60s and some of this continued. The Russians, especially those who lived east of Lake Baikal, were extremely worried about their land vulnerability to Chinese incursions. They kept under the Soviet Union fairly significant forces and depended for ultimate defense on the ability to deter through their nuclear superiority. The Chinese over the years developed their own nuclear capability. I don't think that either the Russians or the Chinese as things went on and they patched up their border difficulties and began to settle their problems along the border saw that military deterrence alone as the answer. Nor was confrontation an appropriate policy. They developed what concerned us, a halfway house. The Chinese kept their people on their side of the border although a lot of day traders and others seeped into Russia. A lot of the Russian Far East was permeated by the presence of Chinese commodities and consumer goods.

The Russians kept some forces in the region, as they should have, but Russian forces declined in size, efficiency and effectiveness. The training was bad, the military discipline was bad, organization was bad, the units were hollowed out, the conscription system didn't work very well, and it was abusive. The Russians particularly didn't want to serve in the military they were not well paid. It was the kind of subject to State-run involuntary servitude organized on material grounds and people found ways through corruption to get out of it.

On the other hand, China became really the best customer for modern Russian weapons and the Russian began to fall behind in the modernization of weapons so their fighter aircraft were usually a generation behind ours, although it's becoming increasingly more expensive and more difficult to develop the next generation of modern fighters. We may see whether the presence of American superiority and the F-22 is the last modern fighter generation, the penultimate perhaps. But the Russians are coming along behind. There were some mistakes that hurt. There was some competition between MiG and Sukhoi in Russia to develop the next round of fighters. Both did pretty well and to some extent Sukhoi was particularly innovative. The Russians looked at these competitions with the United States and places like China and Malaysia and elsewhere for sales, as measures of its ability to continue to maintain its exports. This was the period when oil prices were still fairly low and so Russia was balancing on the edge basically of being able to maintain its economy and fundamentally grow or continuing to decline. Advanced fighter and other aircraft sales became important to both parties. The Russians generally dialed back a bit the technology in what they sold to avoid a serious threat from China in its capacity to establish and maintain air superiority in case of a conflict.

We did not, make a major effort to prohibit or block Russian military sales to China, as I recall and the Russians went on and negotiated this themselves. We recognized that the Chinese were developing indigenous aircraft and indeed, from time-to-time, our friends in Israel were closely

working with the Chinese on some of their capabilities. We had less than strong capabilities to affect both countries' programs with China. Where we had concerns were activities that others engaged in if it was particularly high tech and threatened in a direct way American forces in any future confrontation. But over the years, the sales to China and India of modern aircraft and their assembly in China and India provided the Russians with income, especially in times of economic stringency for them

*Q: What about in Moscow did you have much contact with the Chinese ambassador? Were we sharing interests, I mean two major powers and in the site of a third major power?*

PICKERING: Yes, we had reasonably friendly contact with the Chinese, but we did not have a close relationship or an intimate exchange of views. The Chinese ambassador had been in Russia a long time. He had some really astute observations about Russia and the Russians and he was willing to chat and share those. I did not have a program of regular calls to exchange information, but we talked from time to time as diplomats do.

*Q: How about the Japanese were they a factor at all?*

PICKERING: The Japanese were and they had a particularly affective ambassador. Their major preoccupation was the four islands in southern Kuriles that the Russians had occupied during World War II. The Japanese felt were still part of the mainland Japan. The Japanese wanted to recover them. We spent quite a bit of time with the Japanese in Washington and Tokyo and in Moscow talking with them about their strategy and how one might deal with the Russians on the issue. On various visits Yeltsin paid to Japan or that the Japanese paid to Yeltsin they would move a little bit but not very, very far.

The Russians in that period were still living under the shock of the breakup of the Soviet Union and in effect the loss of the republics in what the Russians have come to call the CIS or the former Soviet Union. As a result, they were extremely concerned about Muslim areas in Russia becoming part of a next stage of breakup. That is why Chechnya was for them a particularly difficult issue and why they looked to try to cement contacts with the Central Asia and all the Muslim states. They were also particularly worried about the vulnerability in the Far East to the break-up. So the notion that they would give back territory that they felt they had occupied fair and square as a result of the Second World War was not an appealing idea for them. It was made harder because of its potentially very negative impact on Yeltsin's popularity or his ability to get his people elected in the Duma. I would say that a primary requirement in assessing Russian policy is to look to the domestic political impact and to pay a great deal of close attention to that. Russia will want to avoid domestic negative impacts from the perspective of the governing elite. So there was a kind of triangle of domestic influence that goes with foreign policy and I think the Japanese in their effort to recover the islands suffered from this. There were various proposals made. Yeltsin at one time said, "We will give back two and keep two" kind of thing. The Japanese were unprepared to settle for anything less than all four islands but kept at it and still keep at it today. Of course it still remains one of the unresolved issues of the post-Second World War.

*Q: Looking at the Cold War the greatest gift the Soviets could have had was to hang on to those islands. It kept Japan out of the equation; it kept Japan solidly on our side where as there might have been some wiggle room for them.*

PICKERING: Yes, the Japanese were sufficiently concerned by the presence of the Soviet Union and its enormous strength as they saw it and about China, that the US alliance, the peace treaty with the United States remains a major fact in Japanese thinking. Getting back the islands I don't think would fundamentally change Japan's close relationship with the United States and the west. What would change that would be a fundamental reversal of American attitudes toward Japan. At various times, U.S. administrations have been hot and cold on these things, but never negative. If we thought we would alienate Japan, Japan was just too important in geographical terms and too important in industrially and economically and in military terms for us to let that happen. We were very supportive of the Japanese regaining of the islands and had very little or no fear that this would somehow permit the Japanese to go wobbly on us at some future time. There was too much else at stake.

*Q: What about when you were there, you were there from when to when now?*

PICKERING: I was there from May of '93 to November of '96.

*Q: How stood the situation in Chechnya?*

PICKERING: Well the first Chechen war broke out I forget in '94 maybe or '95. We all saw it as having a potential impact on Yeltsin's election campaign in '96 for re-election and to some extent it may have done that. It was clear that the Russians took the initiative. It could help win his re-election, but it was also clear that Chechnya in that period was operating pretty much semi-independently. Chechnya has a common border with Georgia and it was the only one of the twenty-two republics in the Russian Federation that had a majority of non-Russian population. It had this tradition since the 19<sup>th</sup> century of guerrilla warfare against the Russians. In World War II Stalin was so concerned about the Muslim population of Chechnya that he deported them quite brutally to Kazakhstan. They were permitted later to return and managed to find their way back. This was done because of the fear that this group would be sympathetic with the German military as they came in. The Germans never really quite reached Chechnya but got pretty close.

In any event, it appeared as if for a series of political reasons, the Russians both magnified the current problems and then used their military to try to subdue this semi-independent Chechnya. They believed Chechen independence was encouraged by Muslims around the world. Russia wanted to demonstrate that it could achieve a quick and decisive military victory on the eve of the '96 election. It turned out to be a horrible fiasco and Chechens were better guerrilla fighters than the Russians were well organized to deal with them. To some extent Putin repeated this in the period before I guess it was the 2000 election when a number of apartment buildings were blown up in Russia -- some think with the connivance of Russian authorities. That is the charge, but I don't know the answer to that issue. But in both cases, Chechnya seemed to be a black hole willing to absorb badly organized, badly trained Russian military forces allowing them minimal success. The first Chechen war ended through a negotiated process in which the Russians agreed to an autonomous status on the part of the Chechen republic that they could live with. It never

really quite took shape, there was never really total Russian military control and that is when the second conflict began.

It was very interesting because in the early part of the Chechen war we had what I thought was a bad misreading of the situation in part because, I think, we understood our long-term relationship with Russia was going to be larger than Chechnya. I remember talking with Vice President Gore at one point when he came over for a visit and I said, "You know if we treat this like the American Civil War it will be badly misleading." We went out and did that. How valuable the advice of an ambassador, but I think it was a bad overreach on the basis that it was important to continue to support Yeltsin and his team in Russia and that they were the wave of the future and that we wanted to engage ourselves with them and therefore it was important to us not to have differences over Chechnya.

*Q: Were we concerned about Islam within Russia at that time?*

PICKERING: We were and maybe not as concerned as the Russians were but we felt that they had a pretty strong view about Islam and what it would mean. We were also concerned in two ways. We were concerned that it might become radicalized as it seemingly had been in Chechnya and become the basis for potential breakup or break-out in places in Russia that were heavily Islamized. But at the same time we were also concerned about their plight and poor treatment of Muslims there. I can remember maybe in the late summer of '94 I visited Kazan, which is the capital of Tatarstan. It sits right in the middle of the Volga river basin but it is heavily a Tatar and Muslim area. The leader of the republic is President Shaimiev who had just made a treaty with Yeltsin. The treaty gave him more autonomy inside Russia than other Russian republics at the time in part because Yeltsin needed to have no more problems in that region. Shaimiev promised the combination of an ability to control things locally and a growth in prosperity. It is an oil producing region. At the same time he kept things enough under control that it didn't bring big problems for Yeltsin. That had always been seen after that treaty was worked out as a potential basis for a way out of the Chechen war. To some extent it lent itself to that in the evolution of the agreement to end the first Chechen war. The Russians who are very tough about allowing even a quasi independent state whatever that might be. And the Chechens never found that as a satisfactory solution.

*Q: We saw the Soviet military, you mentioned of it being hollowed out and really falling apart. How did we feel about this in a way where we sort of are saying, "Gee, isn't this terrible, here is a perspective enemy or something or at least former enemy with no really good military or were we figuring it would be better if they had an effective instrument?"*

PICKERING: We were deeply concerning regarding the nuclear force by the wide disbursement of the nuclear weapons all over Russia, small anti-aircraft units might have had some nuclear storage for forces to use against planes and space craft. We encouraged the Russians to try to concentrate nuclear weapons storage in very large facilities some of which we designed and built for them to end the dispersal. Our concern being that badly trained, maybe paid off or corrupt guard elements, might allow some of these nuclear warheads to wander into the hands of terrorists. Over a period of time that was a basis for the Nunn-Lugar Program. It's very considerable effort was one of the major steps to take care of that problem.

The second area obviously that we didn't even think about a lot but I thought about a fair amount was do we want the Russians conventional forces to be effective, well organized and capable or do we really care. I think we were of both minds. To some extent if their conventional forces lost capability, they would be less of an offensive threat to the neighborhood and many areas of the neighborhood were our friends and allies. To the other extent the fact that they were feckless and incapable and corruptible and unable to deal with problems, left us with deep concern that Russia might become increasingly vulnerable to people breaking off, through internal splits, to pulling the forces away or the forces just not being able to perform their job. But we were in no real condition to provide the Russians with money or advice as to how to reorganize themselves. To some extent the Russians struggled with this problem and they keep talking about these days about raising military budgets and reforming. I think some of the problem, not all of it, but some of it may have come from the problem of too many generals. They had a very large force, which was gradually reduced, but they kept all the generals. So people who were generals in charge of hollowed out forces didn't care as long as they got their pay and their perks. But the notion that you would consolidate all these hollowed out forces and create a much smaller and much more effective military was deeply threatening for some. The military themselves had to carry this out. Putin was in a position to order it but not in a position to get it done nor was Yeltsin. I think they were very careful about not wanting to order things in the military that would be unpopular from the top to the bottom. At the same time they were concerned by what was going on, but they decided over time they had to live with it rather than to seek to play a major role in catalyzing change. We kind of let them be the lean forward people on this rather than ourselves. There was so much else going on in Russia at the time and that because of this dichotomy of views about where this force would be effective or threatening to us was a good reason to be cautious about which way to provide our advice and support. (This has changed now -2015- with real efforts to improve Russian forces as shown in Crimea and eastern Ukraine).

*Q: What about Ukraine? Was this...because this as long as the Ukraine is outside of Russia, Russia really isn't really Russia? I mean this is a huge potential, it is like taking France out of Europe and...*

PICKERING: Yes, to some extent that was true. The Russians for reasons of nostalgia were much more concerned about this than the Ukrainians and in particularly eastern Ukraine is heavily Russian-speaking in population. There were very strong feelings of nationalism in western Ukraine in particular and that it should be separate from Russia. I used to say when I was in Russia I never met a Russian who didn't have someone in their extended family married to a Ukrainian and in Ukraine I never met anybody who spoke Ukrainian who didn't start a conversation talking about the 400 years of Russian occupation. So their mindsets were quite different. We supported and accepted an independent Ukraine. In those days the leadership in Ukraine was very Soviet and to some extent that provided some comfort to the Russians, although they were changing the signboards and introducing the language and becoming used to the idea that they had a separate relationship to Russia rather than one that had been merely folded together in 400 years

Russia is full of Ukrainians all over and I think still see themselves as mixed minds. They are effective Russian speakers but have Ukrainian surnames. They are to some extent still closely



ried to Russia. Many of them consider themselves full blown bona fide immigrants rather than people who will eventually go back home to an independent Ukraine. Some of this, of course, has become more polarized with the post-2005 color revolutions and Ukraine is going through its own revolution now in a slightly more pro-Russian mode, but in those days Ukraine was getting all of its energy for free from Russia.

Russia played a very effective role with us in getting the Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons. Of course when Ukraine split off, the military equipment including nuclear weapons that were in the Ukraine stayed there. The Russian's were deeply concerned about the Black Sea fleet and what to do about it and went through a long period where eventually they divided up the ships. But the Russian ships were able to keep their bases in Ukraine.

*Q: Well actually in a way looking at the Black Sea fleet it was certainly a wasting asset wasn't it? It didn't do anything.*

PICKERING: All Russian fleets were a wasting asset, yes. But they had still some quite modern ships and some things of value. The Russian has developed big naval shipyards in Ukraine and wanted to be able to build large vessels there if they were going to but they had no money to do that. One of the reasons why the Black Sea fleet and all the other fleets were wasting assets is they had no money to maintain them...

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: ...and declining sailor population to man the ships. But they were able over a period of time to man some limited deployments and so from time to time they kept some of the Pacific fleet ships in the Indian Ocean and even in the Persian Gulf but it was very limited, a token at this point.

*Q: I often had the feeling that our submarines would get off outside the Kola Peninsula and say, "Can anybody come out and play?" I mean because for us to have a significant naval force we needed somebody to play with.*

PICKERING: Well we did even some joint maneuvers with the Russians when I was there so we did a marine landing exercise with them in the Pacific fleet area around Vladivostok. We did some disaster relief joint training including having actually Russian ships come to Hawaii, so some of this took the form of cooperative efforts and we attempted to build strong relationship between the Russian Coast Guard and their Pacific fleet and our Coast Guard in Alaska on fisheries, That had to do where we had continuing problems with the Russian fishing fleet violating some of the treaties in the protected areas for deep-sea fishing.

*Q: Well did you find yourself an old hand at fishing problems because you and Roz Ridgeway both...*

PICKERING: Roz did all the work I didn't put in any effort. Actually it was very interesting because certainly after Roz left John Negroponte succeeded in that job and John did a wonderful job there too.

*Q: Well did you find this sort of an odor of fish coming back to haunt you from time to time?*

PICKERING: Well some of it and we attempted to get the Russians to ratify the boundaries in the Bering Strait which we had resolved They haven't ratified it yet it still remains outstanding.

*Q: But did...were you going up and making protests about Russian fishing?*

PICKERING: Yes occasionally we had an incident that would come up and we had pulled a Russian fishery ship out of what was called the doughnut hole, it was an area in which we both agreed we wouldn't fish in the north central Pacific area where the economic zones would have overlapped and we occasionally found Russian ships in there, Russian fishing vessels and we'd pick them up and fine them. The Russian would sometimes complain, sometimes not. The Russians were not particularly strong because they'd sent their border guard fleet or their Coast Guard fleet to monitor those activities that they should have been and we thought they could handle it. I think you know we started out with Japan and we used full intervention in the Japanese area. There were significant elements of trade going on, timber. the Russian's gave their Merchant seamen the opportunity to bring back a car on the voyage so they would all buy second hand, left hand drive cars in Japan. They were usually IN very good shape and bring them to the Russian Far East so in the Russian Far East you had a large number of Japanese cars with the wheel on the wrong side and, of course, trying to drive on the right side of the road produced a lot of confusion. Some of these would even find their way into western Russian by way of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, being shipped in because they were such good value. They were usually generally well-maintained and well cared for and good value as used cars.

Of course Russians began to develop petroleum on Sakhalin when I was there and that's only now beginning to produce. But the Japanese were looking forward to alternative sources of petroleum in Southeast Asia and the Middle East up to Siberia. I think that's beginning to develop as well. The Japanese have huge energy import needs.

*Q: OK, well we'll stop at this point and as usual I'll put...I think we've covered an awful lot. But a couple questions I have to ask. On the agricultural side use of AID cultural attaches and Russian agriculture has always been of great interest both ways so we'll talk about agricultural. Then I would like to talk about the use of our consulate generals. At that point you had one in obviously was it St. Petersburg...*

PICKERING: St. Petersburg, yes.

*Q: ...and Vladivostok?*

PICKERING: Yeah and then we opened Ekaterinburg (Yekaterinburg).

*Q: OK, oh that's the old Stalingrad isn't it? No, no it's not...*

PICKERING: Sverdlovsk.

*Q: Sverdlovsk, yeah. So we'll talk about that and then I guess is there anything else you think we should cover in Russia?*

PICKEIRNG: You know what we might cover are our relationships with the Russians and the embassy, local employees and their hiring, the construction of the new embassy in Moscow. We might cover the kind of things like ranges of contacts with the Russians, travel which I don't think we've covered which would be of interest.

*Q: And also the cultural side.*

PICKERING: What we were doing on the cultural side and maybe some of the economic activities. There are huge areas still out there.

*Q: OK, today is the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2007. Tom, where we had a lot of things to talk about maybe we can start off with the cultural activities.*

*PICKERING: OK, you had asked me originally about agriculture.*

*Q: Agriculture, OK, all right well let's talk about...*

PICKERING: Let's talk about agriculture before we get into culture.

Q: OK, let us talk about agriculture before we get into culture.

PICKERING: Agriculture is a fascinating subject and obviously worth several books in Russia. Russia has good soil and variable climate and generally speaking the Soviet Union had a quite poor record on agriculture, a lot of ups and downs and a lot of variability. That used to worry people including Mr. Khrushchev who thought corn might be the answer although it was I think marginally useful to the Russians in many ways because of the climate and soil conditions in particular. When I arrived in Russia we had still the Soviet system engaged in controlling the arrangements, Much later in the three and a half almost four years that I was there it hadn't changed radically and in large measure this was due to political reasons. At one point during my service in Russia probably in the winter of '94, we took a look at agriculture and I did more intensively and actually went out in deep snow and visited a number of private farms. Roughly the number of private individuals farming in Russia was 230 thousand out of a population of well above 150 million -- insignificant in rural areas. This was not very much and they suffered under really serious hardships.

So the bulk of the farming system in Russia was still state farms and collective farms and in part coming out of the turmoil in October of 1993. The Communist Party fearful of what retribution Yeltsin might actually reek upon it as a result of their arming themselves and creating an insurrection at the Parliament House, That followed a long period in which they dominated the Lower House of Parliament and frequently changed the constitution which provoked Mr. Yeltsin. They decided as a point of survival for the future that it might be a good idea to divide the party into pieces, at least two. One of these pieces was the rural party and it became the Agrarian Party but it was really the Communist Party in everything but name.

The Agrarian Party was seen by the Communist as bedrock for their future. In effect it was a managed system of bosses. The Agrarian Party managed to appoint or elect I'm not sure exactly how but of course the big problem for them is the state farm and collective farm managers as their party leaders in the rural areas and to use employment on the farm and the benefits conferred by the farm as a measure of extra pressure if persuasion was needed for the individuals resident on the farms both to preserve the farms and their structures but also to vote frequently, early and often as Communists in whatever elections came up in the Russian system. So they had this hammerlock on the rural situation, which I think problem continues to this day. It meant that it was very hard to privatize land. There were some attractions to this and I'll talk about those in a minute.

In the meantime, the dominance of the state and collective farms meant that a lot of old practices continued. There was subsidization, there was a high degree of inefficiency, and a large number of the residents in the farms were either the children or elderly. They provided no labor on the farms. So when I was there it was reckoned that about a quarter of the people resident on the state farms actually contributed labor and this not very enthusiastically -- in part because the benefits they received in return were not also widely apparent to them. But they got some help with food and they got housing but they had been used to this in the Soviet system and there was a deterioration of the economy. After the collapse of Communism they suffered rather than benefited. They also kept very large equipment parks of very old, inefficient and broken machinery on the farms. As you drove by them you could often see these large areas of rusting farm equipment out in the open.

*Q: Did the Russians have a knack of putting, fixing old things? I mean some countries do...*

PICKERING: Interestingly enough they did. I'll point out that when the people privatized they were allowed to go to the farm park and select non-operating equipment and many did and put it to use. In terms of operations, driving around Russia and I did a lot of it, rarely if ever did I see a broken down truck. Almost always I think the Russians with a combination of bailing wire and commitment and the production of very sturdy equipment, most of trucks were produced for military purposes, were easily fixed. The Russians hued to that pattern, they were able to keep things going.

What happened was that individuals were given in many state farms certificates of title to pieces of the land. If they wanted to run their own farms they were allowed to dispose of this, either to accumulate other peoples pieces and put together a private farm or often they were allowed to sell certificates to other individuals who wanted to pick up farm land to privatize. The state farms and the collective farms traditionally provided the individual farmers when they had to, when it was pushed to the line, the worst areas, the swamps, the unproductive near wasteland areas and so private farmers had a very hard time getting going. The people who went into private farming had to persevere with a great deal of determination.

I can remember meeting in Tver, north of Moscow, on a very cold February day a lady who ran a private farm in the midst of a collective farm. We went out in huge snowdrifts to visit her animal pens. The rest of the farm was very deep under snow, but she had only women working with her

and she was very stalwart and obviously determined to make this particular venture work and with the kind of guts and determination what she had already achieved in the midst of great difficulty it was not a surprise to me that some Russians were making a go of it. But when you compared it to the U.S. system it was fascinating because you had no support for rural electrification other than what was there. You had no real system then for providing for loans necessary to deal with farming and borrowing obviously the support planting, soil preparation and all those other things fertilizers, insecticides that farmers need to have to make things work. These Russians were not in many ways overwhelmed with large amounts of cash, they had to find ways to scrimp and save in order to make their situation work whether it was veterinary services or other things. So that was difficult.

The system failed utterly both for the collectives and state farms and for the private farms in being able to reduce significantly post-harvest food losses. While I was not an expert, people consistently estimated that up to 30 percent of Russian crops were basically lost in the harvest process, almost often through poor field storage and a failure to pick them up and move them to market or a failure, once moved to market, efficiently to process these in factories. There were good and bad years as we have seen since 1994, 1995. On occasions since then, the Russian system has actually produced significant enough crops to become serious exporters of grains and things of that sort which attests to the value of the soil and when the weather is right the basic capability of the system to produce good agriculture.

I spent a significant amount of time with a University of Washington professor by the name of Roy Prosterman who I had known in El Salvador and who had been one of the inspirations behind land reform in El Salvador which had been a principal bulwark against guerrilla takeover in the countryside. It endowed poor farmers with small amounts of land. Roy was similarly working to try to promote private farming in Russia, but it was extremely difficult and with this cabal so to speak of the Communist Party in its ability to muster significant strength in Lower House of Parliament through its Agrarian wing it had in effect the capability of in those days of blocking important privatization legislation by putting together coalitions to do so. Then it was very, very hard to move things ahead in Russian. It was further complicated both in urban and rural areas by a lack of real survey data on the land and an ability to produce viable plats and other documents necessary to make this happen. So all of these presented obstacles to privatization of agriculture and the movement forward of agriculture in a more modern way. They were stuck with older farming techniques -- there was not a lot of updating.

There were some interesting efforts on the part of foreign agriculturalists to move ahead. Some folks attempted to create large industrial farms in Russia, but with local difficulties as any investor did. In Russia often the situation was such that they would pick up a partner without a lot of careful investigation of the background. The partner would have his relationships with the local authorities whether this was in farming or industrial production or anything else. That would smooth the way and the investment would be set up and the American money captured in the investment. But a year or two later things fell apart. Often with the connivance of the Russian partner who saw in fact the American as his stepping stone on the path of prosperity and used his local contacts and connections to provide the governmental sanctions necessary to separate the American partner and his money and the project and permit the Russian partner remain in sole charge. This worked well for the Russians when they had a project or an activity they could

manage and run because the market was assured. It didn't work very well if the American was an essential link between whatever project was and the market. So the more pedestrian and smaller scale these things were, the easier they fell. We had a large number of cases where this happened, some in rural agricultural land, but most of them in urban development investments by Americans who came in early, were quite naive, didn't make sure of the bona fides of their partner or indeed of the capability of that partnership -- not only to survive but to be very close to three levels of government, municipal, Oblast (or state level in American term) and the federal government. All of them had a role in this process and all of them obviously played a broader role not just in agricultural investment but broader investment.

It was an interesting difference I think in one area where McDonald's came in. Essentially Canadian McDonald's because American McDonald's leader, the inventor of McDonald's, was not interested in cooperating with Communists. In the end he allowed his Canadian subsidiary to do this. McDonald's found that when they came to Russia, unlike other areas where they had invested, they had to handle two big issues very much on their own. One was personnel and training. While in many cases around the world I understand they had to do this, in Russia it was an extraordinary challenge for them. The Russians were brought up on the 'we pretend to work; they pretend to pay us' attitude of Communism. Their standards with respect to service were very low. Their ideas about cleanliness and how to deal with the general public were very much shaped by the old Communist system and their own experience under it, rather than by what one would call modern practice in these areas. So McDonald's had to do a lot of extensive training.

But the other was the supply to McDonald's of raw materials -- fruit and vegetables -- and McDonald's has been generally and certainly was in Russian, meticulous about where it got its supplies from and how they met quality standards. In Russia early on, with investigation, they found there were no local suppliers of things like meat, potatoes, or spices or bakery goods or many other things. So they invested over \$40 million outside of Moscow to create a center for the processing and production of the raw materials that went into their restaurant chain. This center looked forward to supporting a very large number of restaurants in the '70s, but when I was there they were moving from restaurant two to restaurant seven or something of that sort, so it represented a lot of overhead. But it was a very interesting enterprise because in effect they had created a bakery, which on a daily basis could provide enough buns and other things for 70 to 75 functioning, equipped actually hardworking restaurants. So they were smart, in the end and they produced the baked goods but fully a large percentage of which every day they shipped to Warsaw to handle the Polish operation until they were on their own feet and they were able to run on a broader basis in Russia.

They brought in and trained butchers to be expert in taking Russian meat and examining it, providing it to their restaurants in the form in which it had to be used. They had to enter into a partnership in southern Russia with potato farmers to produce the right variety and the right size and the right quality. Russia lives on potatoes and knows a lot about potatoes but what people produced in Russia and the way it was presented in the market place didn't nearly meet the standards that McDonald's required. McDonald's produced and manufactured in this big complex all of its own software, everything that you could think of so that in fact they began when they stood up one restaurant they had this huge overhead structure but quickly moved and

added others to it. I think now they probably have up to 70 in Moscow alone plus many others across the country.

The McDonald's people had enough business to persuade Coca Cola to come in next. Since they were an exclusively Coca Cola serving enterprise at least in Russia, they produced large volumes of Coca Cola in very big metal containers that were highly specialized for McDonald's restaurants alone.

That was a kind of interesting experiment and the combination of very strict standards, very elaborate training and very draconian policies with respect to letting people go who didn't quickly measure up to their standards, set a pattern that was different from what traditionally had happened in Russia.

*Q: Did the Russians have parallel laws that we're seeing today in France or you hire somebody and you can't let them go?*

PICKERING: No, I think that they allowed in the early days McDonald's pretty much to hire and fire on the basis of performance. In part because they had so many people that wanted to work that any investment which created jobs was extremely important and they were prepared to support the notion that the best Russians, the best performing Russians, should get those jobs. They were not prepared to oppose it.

I mean you had this interesting situation when in the 1990s, early 1990s before the fall of Communism, this kind of activity was totally prohibited. But as soon as Communism fell, those laws fell away too and no regulatory structure rapidly moved in to take its place. The notion of a whole body of law regulating the economy as opposed to the state running the economy was quite strange to the Russians -- quite unusual for them.

*Q: So in one case it was the lack of laws as an inhibitor but in the case of a hard charging company like McDonald's it was a positive factor?*

PICKERING: It could be seen either way. I think a lack of laws if you are looking for protection of the law is obviously a problem. A lack of laws if you're looking for the ability to move in a very broad way without being hamstrung by a regulatory structure is very enabling and McDonald's took advantage of this.

*Q: How did McDonald's go over in...?*

PICKERING: Extremely well. I was there, of course, after the first and initial foray of McDonald's when they first set up their first restaurant, but it became almost a kind of cause celeb in a positive way. It became an import of western life and culture. In effect, many Russians saw this as how to have a night out in the United States, so to speak. But what amazed Russians and pleased them because it pleases everybody, is fast and efficient service and very clean standards in the operations. Prices were high for Russians in those days, but they felt they got quality for what they paid for and they had an opportunity to develop a taste for food which was

different from what they had, but not so different, in fact, that they couldn't readily adapt to it. So all of those things played a role.

What was really fascinating, of course, was that they had no opportunity to serve alcohol, no interest in serving alcohol. The only time that I ever had a drink in McDonald's in Russia was the opening night of the third McDonald's on the old Arbat and Yeltsin came around and they actually served beer for that one night. The invited people were asked in and had free food and beer that night. What was unusual which was reported in the press was that when Yeltsin came he was quite surprised to find that the manager of the operation was a woman. This was unusual in Russia and indeed before I left Moscow the top Russian in the whole operation of McDonald's in Russia was a woman and there was only one non-Russian engaged, it was an American who was the kind of overall manager. He made it his business to try to find the most capable and effective people and women generally tended to emerge up to scale quickly in Russian operations in part because they had a much stronger work ethic. They had a harder road to hoe in Russian practice. There was obviously a misogynous bias in Russia that kept women down and differentiated in salaries. So there was this opportunity to find a new opening. It was also interesting that it was reported that Yeltsin sat and talked with this woman who was running either that store or maybe the whole chain, one of the other at the time, and was shocked and surprised to find that her salary in rubles was larger than his as president of Russia. Of course, nobody counted into that all of the other perks that he got, but he was quite surprised to find that McDonald's was paying so well.

*Q: Did one of these mega agricultural firms such as Archers Daniel Midland and other ones that we have now that run these not collective farms but its concentration...*

PICKERING: Large industrial farms.

*Q: Large industrial farms. Did they have an interest with...?*

PICKERING: They had a very serious interest but they faced a great deal of uncertainty. They had uncertainty both in terms of whether they would be able to protect their investment and they had uncertainty as to whether in the Russian context, they could produce results, as dependent as they were on the Russian system for services and for support.

*Q: What about the role...*

PICKERING: They didn't go rapidly and you know land was very tightly held, very valued in Russia.

*Q: What about the roads system? One of the problems with Russian agriculture had been laid to the fact that they really don't have a good way of getting the grain out and all that? Was that a problem?*

PICKERING: Well I think less so than people have portrayed it and the problem was more managerial. I, perhaps more than any of my predecessors and maybe my successors, had a lot of road travel in Russia. I was the first ambassador who was able pretty freely to travel by road.



Prior to my time, maybe it relaxed in Bob Strauss' time, but he didn't do a lot of traveling at least that was my impression. But after the fall of Communism the Russians wanted to open up to diplomats both countries very widely and we unfortunately, I think, in those days of some paranoia and the Federal Bureau of Investigation dominance in the scene, did not want to agree to the travel of Russian diplomats without prior approval. We wanted to keep the old KGB system which had been imposed on us for years in Moscow. We had a 45 kilometer ring around Moscow or 25 kilometer ring around Moscow you couldn't go past without special permission. There were check points that kept all western diplomats in, unless you had received permission to travel and then often you were forced to travel by train or air and not by road. But I was able to get in my car and go anywhere because our negotiation where it was agreed that if you were a counselor level or above you could travel without prior permission, except for entry into military areas. If you were below counselor level, you had to give prior notice. That was the compromise, It was of any real value for the Embassy as a whole. But it still continues to this day I think, and the Russians were pretty good but they required four or five days notice to give permission.

When I traveled, I did two kinds of travel on the road so I saw a lot of the roads. One was preplanned trips where I would do a lot of official business. They were always notified, even informally, but I would always ask the foreign ministry for help in contacting the local governors in setting up visits. They would always host me when I came and make arrangements for visits to see things that I wanted to visit and suggest things on their own.

The other was basically because my wife and I were very interested in Russia and historical Russia, we would often go on weekends to a dacha we had that was some 35 kilometers outside of town outside of town toward the northeast. We would then just get in our car early in the morning on Saturday, go out Friday night, and travel. Of course, that whole circuit up to the northeast, up toward the Volga, was the golden ring tourist circuit and there were a lot of Russian towns and cities, many of them still quite rundown, that had very interesting historical places to visit. So we tended to do this even in the wintertime whenever we could. I generally found the following and I'd spent a lot of my life in Africa and a lot of my life in the Middle East -- Russia had more paved roads for its density than Africa and the Middle East certainly. Generally speaking the roads were pretty well repaired on the main highways and even some of the back secondary connecting roads which were paved were pretty well repaired. On a number of longer trips, I got on to gravel roads and they seemed to be, certainly in the summer when I was traveling, reasonably well preserved. You would find places where it was chewed up a little bit and you would find places where maybe a bridge was in poor condition or things of that sort. But generally speaking, on long trips I would go in a four-wheel drive vehicle of some kind that would then coming out of my experience in Africa that was a sources of salvation. Occasionally you would find roads under construction or that hadn't been built yet.

I remember we took a long trip down the Volga valley and we started in Nizhny Novgorod, which under the Communist was called Gorky. We went all the way down to Azov on the Sea of Azov and half way down outside of Ulyanovsk which is quite a large town, it was were Lenin came from, the main road was no longer there. We saw this on our Russian road atlas -- I was also a map collector. I used to make maps in the Navy and I am very fond of maps. I'd go down on the Arbat and I would buy maps at the stores. The Russians produced in those days sometimes

at a reasonable scale very good maps of each Oblast when you could find them, so I have a partial collection.

Well we noticed on the maps that there was sort of a break in this main highway. And indeed there was when we came to it we went up a very large abutment to a bridge, which that wasn't there, that was to go over a local river. We suddenly looked around and we could see a dirt road going off to the right and so we had to turn around and get off this high embankment and took a dirt road and it went three kilometers or four kilometers to the west and circled around and got back on the other side of the unfinished bridge.

*Q. This is Tape 19, Side 1, with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: So you met things of that sort and while I was there we. In addition to the long trip on the Volga, we took trips up toward St. Petersburg and Pskov to the northwest and we drove down to Kiev through Ukraine and the agricultural provinces north of the Ukraine border. I drove to Archangel, which is up near the Arctic Circle, and then my wife and I and a small group took a 32-day trip through southwestern Russia and the Central Asian stans and visited all of them except Tajikistan, which was then in fairly heavy turmoil and the embassy was under a lot of pressure and they didn't need a lot of visitors on their back. But the rest of it was fine and for most of that we found the roads pretty good, including the main road that connected Russia to Kazakhstan roughly in the center of Kazakhstan. There was about an 80 kilometer stretch of unpaved which was a little bit rough going through the desert but not terrible by Middle Eastern or African standards.

*Q: Did you find on these trips...I'm reverting back to my time in the sixties when I was in Yugoslavia and you go to the cities and fine but you get out in the country and you are back about three centuries and talk about the villages and all. How did you find them? I mean this is much later and in a different country. How would you describe what you saw in the villages?*

PICKERING: I would say that what we saw in the villages was pretty much the same -- rural life, no running water or sanitary facilities except in the back garden. There were villages in our area -- near our dacha where we walked around. We were not invited by people to come into their house which was a disappointment, but we saw all over Russia a large number of museums which incorporated traditional Russian buildings and houses and so we got a good idea of what a Russian peasant log house was like from visiting those. We suspected that these modern villages were still updated modern peasant houses, but they were particularly over north and north central Russia made of logs. They were built along a main street stretched out and they had outdoor privies and in some cases they had piped water and in other cases they had wells. Often they were quite nicely decorated, they had fret work, that is sawn boards on the outside with things you get...

*Q. Carpenters gothic.*

PICKERING: Carpenters gothic. They had...the fall of Communism produced this fixing up spurt because these people suddenly owned these places rather than inhabited State land. So a lot of people were cleaning up country houses when they had money to do so. Many of them had

small intensive gardens around them, some for flowers and some for food. Some of them obviously had had seen better days, the log house were sagging from frost heave, the roof was open, but most of the people tried to keep up. As you drove through these and you drove through literally hundreds and hundreds of villages, but all the small ones were like that. Occasionally they might have a stone building for a school or a church, often disused. But usually a very wide main street with log houses enclosed often by small fences, cheek by-jowl along the street, not jammed close together like tenements but not so far apart in fact that people were in truly spacious living. The Russians used larch, a native timber for log house construction as it held up well in the climate and was soft enough to be easily worked and grew straight and of regular diameter.

*Q: I suppose too that they all have their gardens and fruit trees and...*

PICKERING: They did.

*Q: Because this is...*

PICKERING: They did make use of their land and they may have had opportunities to work on other people's pieces of land. One of the things that you will notice now in Russia, if you fly into the airport, is large colonies of country houses, some of them very large and made of brick put into areas that used to be collective farms, surrounding the large town. The Russians loved to get out of town for the weekend. This began interestingly enough under Communism where small plots, say 25 meters by 75 meters of land, had been made available to urban dwellers. They could come out and farm that land and often build a small garden shed. Sometimes these garden sheds were built large enough to stay overnight.

Then they began what I would call the modern dacha craze because increasingly people did this. They depended on these small plots for subsistence, often heavily for potatoes. In the autumn you would see people with their small cars with potatoes on the roof. Most of the apartments in Moscow had access to some storage area in the basement and often they would keep potatoes there or on the balconies. So this became a way of avoiding the worst impacts of the real economic downturn after the fall of Communism. People had to rely on this for food to survive through in the winter. But it also led to people beginning to build these small colonies out in the countryside where the State or collective farm would advantage itself and sell its land often to some kind of collective group whether it was retired generals or others. Then they would put up buildings and some of them reflected a lot of money and were fairly elaborate brick structures. There was no zoning, there was no differentiation unless the group itself insisted that all of these McMansions be of a certain style were like. So there was a great mix.

There was some piped or well water but I think little or no sewage..

*Q: Don't ask don't tell.*

PICKERING: In any event, so they were basically weekend get a ways, and it was more for people in retirement who tended to go out there to live permanently. But what they were a big blob in the countryside. But Russians from an urban scene were so mad to get out into the

country, to get to places where there were trees, to be able to go particularly in the short summer to drink Vodka, bring in friends, cook outdoors, roast beef, do all kinds of things that people liked to do and for them this was a real step up and an escape from the trap of being apartment dwellers. A lot of it came as a result too of the fact that people had privatized apartments very quickly.

In Moscow, you were allowed for ten thousand rubles two years before I got there to privatize your apartment. That was then a lot of money, but because of inflation, ten thousand rubles two years later was ten dollars. So people borrowed money to pay off their apartments and they could pay off their loans very quickly. For some of them that had access to one more apartment in the family they would consolidate and sell the others off and then use this source of wealth to develop their country properties, or maybe just to survive, whatever they had to do. There was a steady and a lively commerce in real estate that fueled a certain amount of this.

*Q: Did we on this type of social change and all was the embassy nudging, involved watching this sort of thing or was this purely a matter of sort of sitting back and reporting?*

PICKERING: So much was going on -- so much was changing that we tended, I think, quite rightly to limit our, what I would call lecturing, to areas where they were actually using U.S. funds and where we had a serious reason to be engaged. Most Russians understood that. With areas that had become particularly notorious where there were real perversions going on of international standards, we tend to try to weigh in. The rest of our time we tried to stay in touch with and figure out what was going on. In this period of reading it, it didn't seem like it at the time but it does now a kind of volcanic eruption on the social and economic scene.

One of the critical questions that we had was how do people stay alive under conditions of serious inflation and real shortages of food where their salary constantly went down.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: We found a number of very interesting stories. I went out and asked them how do you, or how does your mother who is aged and retired and living in an apartment in some remote provincial city, survive? There were a series of answers. Many had multiple jobs; a day job and a night job. They have a job that you had to do for the State, which they get paid for, but we really don't have to go to and then a private job which they get paid for and have to work hard to hold onto, they can subsist. In a family of husband and wife both work. In a family of husband and wife and senior children they put as many people in the apartment as necessary and they are crammed in. Almost all of the apartments were no longer communal in those days, no common cooking facilities, that had gone, but people did live cheek-by-jowl under very tight circumstances.

The second thing they did was they found it possible because there was low mobility. You couldn't move out of your apartment very easily because you couldn't find another place to go. In Moscow there was still a permit system, "propiska", so you had to have to be there officially on a permit and they weren't issuing permits. You had to have some reason to crack the system or pay a lot of money. So that tended to reduce the mobility which meant that people who lived

in the same apartment block would often know whose wages were due that week or that month and they borrowed from each other. When they got paid, they paid back. So they would know that, but often wages were late and certainly pensions were always late -- but they would know the railways were paying so the three or four people from the railways could finance that apartment block, and it seemed to work pretty well. People knew each other they had been thrown together they knew who to distrust, but they knew who they could trust in the building. They knew that if they did this for other people then other people would not do it for them. So it was a very interesting situation to be in -- a situation where personal trust counted for a lot..

The third out was the farm plots -- the urban people's access to small plots. They cultivated them very vigorously. Generally speaking they would produce a crop of cabbage or potatoes, things that could be stored as winter food to tide them over the long and difficult winters in Russia. Summer time would fill up with the more plentiful vegetable crops. Meat was always scarce and hard to get, but it increased over the time I was there. When I first came there the system of shopping was solely Communist. Stand in line and hope the supply holds out until you get to the front. By the time I left things had opened up and you no longer had to go to a State food store and wait in line to see if there was a little tiny scrap of this or that. Of course even when I first went, there were a few foreign stores, Swedish, Irish or Finnish, where you could buy almost anything at a price but most Russians couldn't afford it.

Half way through my tour by late '94, early '95 a lot of these miserable old State stores had been taken over by an entrepreneur who brought in foods that were had been in shortage, much of which was imported in those days. But the Russians were prepared to commit a certain amount even in times of high inflation. They were hurt by the fall of the value of their currency, which ultimately Yeltsin had to move to stabilize, and eventually he did. Not with a great deal of finality because the currency took another deep nose dive about two years after I left in August of '98. That heavily influenced by the fact that they had been financing a large amount of government debt on very high return bonds. Some of them returned as much as 60 percent. These so called GKO's (short-term zero-coupon Russian government bills), were snapped up by Asian investors, a large amount by Koreans. When the Asian financial crisis dipped in '98, these people got out as quickly as they could and with whatever loss. Someone told me that \$5 billion was repatriated almost overnight to Korea. So this meant that the underpinnings, shaky as they were of Russia's currency, took a nosedive overnight.

*Q: Did you say when you left, I want to come back to some other things, but when you left sort of on the economic side and this includes the producing side did you see a Russia that was going to take its place as one of the industrial nations as we know it?*

PICKERING: No, quite the contrary. You saw a country that had been badly battered, badly designed, fairly overstretched, where a large share of production was military and where plummeting of the military budget clearly affected the operation of factories. I went to a number of Russian large factories, aircraft and military and semi-military equipment, some machine tools, some vehicle productions, but in many of them it was almost impossible to see any major share of workers on the factory floor. They just weren't there; the plants were deserted, cavernous buildings, semi occupied, with at most one small line working.

*Q: Was this because there weren't orders or was this just Russian work habits?*

PICKERING: This was because there weren't orders and after all you had to pay people, you had to pay for military goods, you had budgetary allocations and their military budget had been cut very drastically to permit other things to survive.

*Q: Well, moving into maybe a sensitive subject but how interested were we in Soviet military stuff at that time?*

PICKERING: We were interested in what they were doing and we never had a perfect picture, but it was clear that things like the production of intermediate and long-range missiles did decline very rapidly. We had some insight into that because we had an inspection system Under the IRBM treaty (intermediate-range ballistic missiles) at a plant at Votkinsk to verify that their production was meeting the limit that it was supposed to. It was very interesting because to look at the perimeter which was big, our people walked around it every day outside the fence, and then we inspected the railcars coming out with missiles in them with x-rays. So we had a very clear idea, we knew production was going down.

It was also clear that the ground forces were declining in numbers, under paid and suffering in a very serious way. I can remember that during in the first Yeltsin campaign, the reports that we had had indicated that the major infantry offensive units for Chechnya had been drawn from at least a dozen different divisions. Yeltsin had been able to send troops, but the battalions had been extracted from various divisions by companies, in part because they were under manned. Conscription still existed and it still exists today and it is a brutal establishment. But large numbers of people were escaping in those days conscription; presumably they paid money to escape it.

*Q: Was there any effort while you were there, because the Soviet/Russian system which actually goes back to the Czarist system of the nastiness of the military conscription and what they do to the troops, rather than turning out a professional soldier it works to a point but it's not very effective and it's certainly not very popular in any group. Were they doing anything when you were there?*

PICKERING: Not much. What existed, of course, was the hazing system. So recruits were harassed. I suppose that the U.S. military training system until recently followed a lot of the same practices and some of it probably still does. But the harassment in Russia was not just verbal and psychologically, but it was brutal and physical and it got out of hand. Those who were doing harassing, namely non-coms (non-commissioned) were not supervised by the officers. In many places individuals of a particularly brutal nature tended to carry out punishments on new soldiers. The suicide rate among recruits is quite high in the Russian military, much higher than in our military. This was an indicator of it. Groups of mothers formed both over the Afghan and then the Chechen war and over the hazing in the military training establishment. I don't know that they've had a huge amount of effect but they've had some.

Another interesting thing was that for all that they did, the non-commissioned officers corps in the rest of the military were not moved very far in their actions and opinions. There were not

large numbers, they were not well trained, they would not have assumed the kind of leadership role that they do in the United States and they did not have the same professional proficiency as in the U.S. The Russians tended to substitute officers for not commissioned officers in many jobs. Cadets and others brought in out of university to the officer corps were much more numerous and did many more things inside the Russian system, but there was a rigid division between officers and enlisted men, much more than existed or still exists in the U.S. military today. The social class and educational distinction made a difference, and also where, in fact, the officer was not expected to be responsible for troops in the sense of their morale and their well-being and thus didn't have to look after them. The better ones did because they knew and understood the source of success in combat situations, but there was a kind of distinction, almost going back to Czarist days, that continues to plague the system. They had leadership misfits and that continues to be the case. It was a mystery to me why we were in so many ways so overestimating Soviet ground troops.

*Q: Were the Soviet military leadership looking beyond coming to our or other attaches the same saying how do you develop a leaner/meaner military?*

PICKERING: No, I think that they were very proud, very convinced of their rightness and success of their own endeavors. In some cases they had very high quality training. I think the training for officer cadets in the professional academies was good. Their technical people, generally speaking, were good. I think some of the better leadership in the paratroop divisions and in some of the Special Forces establishments was good. I think that some of the tank divisions were kept up to standard, but across the board there was this wide variation. I had the impression that there were large numbers of divisions which were very badly hallowed out. The one reason that I could deduce for all of this was essentially what I called the general rice bowl problem. The Army was very large and when they reduced it in size, the generals were the last to go. So that meant that the divisions had to stay to justify the general's jobs. To get rid of big segments of top-heavy people meant that you had to go against the generals and the generals had a very strong 'union' and they tended to protect themselves and look out for themselves. So they wanted more jobs for generals and to some extent this began to be the pervasive influence against change. It remains today and that the Russians have not reformed in a serious way by chopping out a number of these hollow units and by increasing training and by building new units from the ground up and to try to find ways to make them more effective and professional.

*Q: Well now moving off to a pretty different subject, but I wonder if you can talk a bit about your impression about one of the great Soviet diplomatic weapons is it's the drinking and feeding of our delegations and all of that. I know I've talked to a commercial officer in China who used to talk about they called it death by duck, by having to go getting Peking duck about three times a week with visiting delegations.*

PICKERING: In Russia it was death by vodka. When I arrived in May of '93, essentially a large share of the bureaucracy and a very significant amount of the attitude and the process was still Soviet. None of these guys had changed, the buildings hadn't changed, the tasks hadn't changed, and the salaries hadn't changed radically. So we were, in fact, enjoying or suffering in the last days of the Soviet system. It was very clear to me very early on that what I had been traditionally told about Russian interest in drinking and to some extent maybe having a drinking contest with

a visiting American ambassador and sort of proving their mettle and asking you to prove your mettle as someone able to hold your alcohol and having a convivial time was very much still in place. Now, there are important psychological reasons why for Russians, particularly in the Soviet environment, it was still there. There was very little else to do. There had been a long tradition in Russian pre-Communism, that vodka was the elixir of life, it took away your cares, it tended to relieve problems of social stress and unease and in a society where you never knew which policeman was going to knock on your door at any hour of the day or night, it helped to say, "Well let's sit back and relax and enjoy."

In those days after communism went the production of vodka flourished. It was one of the earliest privatized ventures. Everywhere you went each town had their new vodka with all kinds of grandiose names, Presidential Vodka, Ambassadorial Vodka, Diplomatic Vodka, you know, whatever, or just of the local town -- in whatever town it was, that was that town's vodka. It tended to be mixed in quality, but not terrible. You could discern the better qualities, but the worse qualities were not awful. My experience was that in traveling in particular, or in Moscow being invited out for a social occasion, vodka appeared. When I went to visit the local governor we would always have a dinner with vodka toasts. My wife often went along with me and she was not forced into this role. She was offered wine, champagne and Armenian cognac. From the better off governors you were greeted by six or seven glasses on the table. One was a small tumbler of vodka; another was water, not often resorted to. You'd have a red wine and a white wine and champagne, and then a cognac glass at the end for Armenian cognac. It was good cognac. The tradition was that you would be welcomed with a toast and then you were expected to return it. I used the toast as much as I could as a teaching mechanism or at least as an educational mechanism or an explaining mechanism. Of course, I would often be with only one other person and my wife and my interpreter, so we would have to carry the burden on our side, while there were ten people on the other side all of whom offered us elaborate toasts. There were several ways obviously to deal with this.

One was what I called the physical approach. The physical approach was that you went to these dinners and they were quite nice, they brought out lots of food and you'd come to the table and it would be set with zakuski, the first course that was cold. The zakuski was considered to consist of everything from raw vegetables to smoked fish, to ham and sausage, black bread, lots of butter, cheese and things of that sort. So I found since I enjoyed the zakuski, that I would fill my plate and myself as rapidly as I could with lots of black bread and that I found this combination of smoked fish, ham, sausage, black bread, butter, cheese and vegetable would provide a very solid base. I would get a lot of that down before the second or third toast.

Then, this being elaborate courses, and the Russian official entertaining was quite formal. I found that the nicest thing which often came after the fish and before the meat was the very small pot of a julienne of mushrooms, very nicely cooked in a cream sauce. You got that as kind of between courses dish. You would have not only the smoked fish but then the next course would be a fish and it would be of miscellaneous variety, sometimes good and sometimes not so good, you didn't have to eat everything.

Then would come a heavy meat course with lots of potatoes and vegetable. Sometimes you got two meat courses. I can remember one evening at Yeltsin's dacha when President Clinton came



and there were five on a side and we had 26 courses including along about number 16, moose lips, which were boiled. By that time we had plenty to drink and we were prepared to face almost anything.

But the thought was that through this process they would see how the American ambassador would hold up and how they held up. They would test your mettle through the drink. If you were a good man you could survive, it was the kind of thing. They would exchange their wisdom and your wisdom on it, there was intellectual content it wasn't totally biased. They enjoyed it because they found an opportunity to have a free meal away from home. Sometimes they would bring their wives and sometimes they wouldn't, often depending upon whether I had my wife or not. It didn't matter much because sometimes they wouldn't. They were always very gracious; they were very pleasant. We avoided coming head-to-head over issues or allowing things to get out of hand. That was very much their pattern.

After you got down the road in toasts, then there were certain traditional toasts that you could give. I quickly on my trips learned how proud Russians were of their Cossacks. So almost everybody would claim some Cossack origin. I had learned from both my interpreter and other visits, a Cossack toast as I had asked people to help me with one. So partly down the line of toasts, we started exchanging Cossack toasts, which were small, short words about travel, you know that kind of thing. We also learned that partly through the toasts and particularly toast number three was always for women. That was always drunk bottoms up or *dad na* in Russian, so you had to be prepared for that. They generally watched what you put in your glass; the idea that in these situations I could substitute water for vodka completely impossible.

Now I have to tell you so that, on full and careful consideration, I always filled up on black bread and the rest of the *zakuski*. I managed to survive, not necessarily always with the greatest feelings of happiness and joy the morning after.

*Q: Did you ever lose an officer all of a sudden, bloop, they fell into the bread pudding or something?*

PICKERING: No, I didn't, and even though we had these come along, we spaced them out. Near the end we drank something else, we were expected certainly to drink champagne, their champagne is fairly sweet. If you wanted, you could have an Armenian cognac. I tried to avoid mixing it up a lot because that was pretty fatal.

Now I go back seven years later and almost all this is gone.

*Q: Really?*

PICKERING: Yes, this behavior is now is uncultured, boorish.

*Q: Nyet con korny.*

PICKERING: *Nyet kulturny*, exactly. But what people learned to do is to appreciate good wine and enjoy it, a lot of that is now imported. We will want to have one or two toasts for old times sake but not have it pushed upon us.

*Q: On this type of thing...*

PICKERING: Actually, it was very interesting because I met two governors, one in Altay which is an absolutely beautiful region in south central Siberia on the Mongolian border, a very rich agricultural region. They were exporting to Europe by Trans-Siberian railroad in the 1890s. The governor there said to me, we were sitting alone, and he said to me, "I don't drink." I said, "Well, I would never hold that against you. I would never in anyway press you." Then a very interesting guy who was a quite famous governor in Primorsky Krai in Vladivostok, Nazdratenko, very well known, he was the really a very interesting guy and hard driver, not necessary very kind to women. He always pretended to drink, but revealed to me late one evening while we were sitting talking alone, that he didn't drink. He would pretend to sip but didn't take it; he would get away with it in his governor toasts because people expected that he did drink. He told me interestingly enough that his father had been an alcoholic, had been brutal in his treatment of the family, and he always blamed it on alcohol. He thought that excessive drinking was a very bad practice.

*Q: Was alcoholism a problem?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, I mean I think with their culture and the situation it was for many people in terms of their lives and economy very bad. It was worse under communism. Things in general were not great under communism, but a lot of old people said, "Oh, the Brezhnev days were best," because they had forgotten all the bad things and remembered only the good things. They had more to eat for example. Comparatively, they were probably for a lot of these people were better. Alcohol was a stress reliever, let's get away from it all, an escape mechanism. Men would indulge and come home and mistreat families and wives and all of that stuff.

The other thing was that it had a real impact on and I think it still does on Russian male life expectancy. So in the last thirteen years, from male life expectancy to age 64, it has gone down to the 50s and the 60s because of alcoholism, poor medical treatment and care and as a result earlier death. Maybe the communists cooked the figures. But that is where these figures came from on age 64 life expectancy for males.

*Q: I mean that is an over...*

PICKERING: As you remember, wasn't it Gorbachev at one point who had a real campaign against it.

*Q: Oh, I know it, yeah.*

PICKERING: To stop the production of vodka...

*Q: On this type of social thing where sort of East meets West and all, were there ever times when somebody would get up and vent his anger at America, or something like that?*

PICKERING: Yes, to some extent you got the Communist line on this. But it was not from personal animosity toward you like, "You know, I'm sorry to say how bad your country is behaved." But I never felt it got to the point where things descended into the disagreeable. Some people could be curt and short you know, but pretty much the American ambassador was well received and treated.

These kinds of events provided an enormous challenge for the interpreter because I didn't speak Russian and what I had was very limited. I had an absolutely fantastic interpreter who started out with me. Language services people said, "Look, we've got someone who wants to come to Moscow." He had vast experience in arms control but also interpreted in other areas. He was born in the Urals and his family then migrated to Poland when he was young and then got out of Poland to the United States. He served in the U.S. Army in Special Forces and he was a very capable, very talented interpreter. I had an apartment in Spaso House that he used when he was in Moscow in case I got called from the government in the evening. There was a lot of negotiating with the president of Ingushetia, a republic next to and closely related with Chechnya. He was trying to help us either get people out of the area or search for people who were lost, the famous Fred Cuny. I can remember many times using the fax -- the fax was usually up and running -- and so we communicated by fax. I'd have to dictate to Steve, the interpreter what I wanted to say to say. Steve would be kind enough to say this isn't going to work, let's try something else. But he would put it down in Russian and we'd send the president who was a former major general in the Soviet Air Force by fax and then get a message back from him. So Steve was very essential. He was so good that he could work in what we called voice over which was basically essentially simultaneous translation without ear phones or other equipment.

*Q: Ouch.*

PICKERING: Everybody says translation these days and forgets that the word of applies to the translation of documents and a translator is someone who works on texts. Everybody has forgotten the word interpreter. He was good with both, but I was usually the only non-Russian speaker in the room, my staff spoke Russian, so they could depend on Steve's interpretation to get out loud what I had to say. Steve would sit next to me and I would just go ahead and set it out, sentence by sentence. He would do a voice over in Russian. To assure his voice would be heard while I spoke, he often asked me to speak in a much lower tone. Then when the Russian side was speaking, he sat next to me and whispered in my ear so I could follow right along almost up to the second with what was being said. This was an extremely good way; it saved a lot of time....

*Q: Also was he telling you what they were really saying or would you get that later on?*

PICKERING: No, no, I thought it was an extremely precise translation.

*Q: But I'm saying after it is all over or something...*

PICKERING: He would often do it two ways. We had to rely on the Russian interpretation and then occasionally he would say that's not right or this is what he meant to say. He would whisper it in my ear this is what he should be saying. Or he left this out -- he should know better. So Steve kept me extremely well informed.

*Q: Did he ever once say, you know he is stiffing it to you but he's doing it in a polite way or something like that?*

PICKERING: No, I could tell from the choice of words and the way in which the interpretation came. People were not nasty, I mean I did find that out. Sometimes they were tough. I can remember going in and talking to Prime Minister Chernomyrdin on a case in which I was arguing that he should give up something we wanted him to give up. He came back very strongly. I might have to go back and say, "No, you haven't considered this problem." But it is not "get the hell out of here".

*Q: Well you mentioned Chernomyrdin. How did the Dole, not Dole, Gore, I'm getting my people mixed up. The Gore-Chernomyrdin...*

PICKERING: Why don't we save that because I'm going to have to break off and by then...why don't we talk about cultural exchange and you save your notes.

Cultural exchange played a significant role in what we were doing and we tried hard to induce USIS and others to bring over things that we thought the Russians would enjoy. Particularly successful for us were things like dance troupes. But people also came on their own. I can remember of course, and he just died, Maestro Mstislav Rostropovich who was then leading the National Symphony. He brought the National Symphony over in the autumn of 1993. He had by then been back a number of times, but he wanted to bring his orchestra and arranged with the Kremlin that the orchestra and the Washington Chorale Arts and other vocal societies as well as the Red Army (Alexandrov) Chorus, would do the 1812 on Red Square. They set it up and they brought Russian bells and their own cannon and put those on the stand. I had them all at the house the evening before. They all came together and we had a fantastic, wonderful party and Maestro Rostropovich came. He was such a wonderful guy. Later I sat on the board of the foundation he has started and which uses all of its money, no overhead, to provide vaccinations for Russian children who can't get them otherwise. He then helps set up the Russian system to take over the program after three years. He also works in Azerbaijan where he was born. As you know, he died two weeks ago. But this cultural performance that Slava put on was absolutely outstanding. It was a time of huge difficulty; it was after Yeltsin had said the parliament had to go. I mean the hold outs were all controlling the Duma building. It was surrounded by police. This was the week before the shooting broke out. We all went and stood in Red Square and I was invited with my wife to stand close to the orchestra in a little fenced in enclosure. Before the concert began, we all looked around to see if Yeltsin was coming. Suddenly the Spassky Gate at the Kremlin opened up and out walked Yeltsin. It was a huge crowd, maybe several hundred thousand, it was really big and he walked over and joined us all in this enclosure. It was cold, bitter cold and the musicians were all afraid their instruments would freeze and they were all wrapped up in scarves. Slava, of course, did a fabulous job and was totally unflappable and without a coat.

This was a highlight. We also brought over the Alvin Alley dance troupe, which I had known years before in Africa. That was sort of a homecoming for us. But the Russians liked modern dance and you couldn't bring enough of it. They loved jazz and you know we were under funded in those days even for the former Soviet Union. They enjoyed plays as well. We had all of these kinds of things from what we would call modern cultural expositions to my traditional events. Russians were also listening to radio and watching international television at this time. They got big dollops of American culture -- the good, bad and ugly.

Q: Not only the business but the actual working relationships and also you mentioned something once. Was the trafficking of human trafficking basically the trafficking of women a problem at that point and then relations with Ukraine and some of the Stans.

*Q: OK, Tom, we have that list. Today is July 3, 2007.*

PICKERING: Let me begin as you suggested with the question of cultural relations. There was no question at all as we discussed the last time that Russians were exposed through the regular hot media in general and many had under Soviet days read some bit of American literature and poetry. It was often carefully selected obviously to produce a view favorable to the Soviet perception of the United States. By the end of Gorbachev, information began to flood in, often in English, not an awful lot that I saw translated into Russian. In addition we attempted to bring groups over and so one of the more successful ones we brought Alvin Ailey dance troop...

*Q: That was an African-American dance troop?*

PICKERING: Exactly, and I had them on one of their very first visits anywhere in the world in Tanzania about 1967 or '68. In fact, members of the troupe have since told me that that trip under USIA actually kept them together. Alvin Ailey was an interesting man who made studies of African dance while he was there and later incorporated it into his repertoire. By the time they came to Russia he was dead, but Judith Jamison, who also on the trip to Tanzania, was the lead dancer, led the troupe. The Russians were extremely interested in modern dance as they were in traditional ballet. It was also true that the Bolshoi, as a ballet company, certainly in the view of many, was failing. Part of it was that the lead dancers had been siphoned off to higher fame and other areas of the world both Western Europe and the United States. At the same time the tradition of the Bolshoi was very rigid and very conservative. So most of the dance followed what were typically the standards and tenets of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century choreography. If you wanted a good look at reasonably high quality traditional ballet in Russia you went to the Bolshoi. The Kirov, the Mariinsky in St. Petersburg, was generally judged and still is in my view is judged to be a better company in terms of what it does. But the Alvin Ailey exposure was extremely interesting because it incorporated all of the modern dance forms with a lot of relationship to America's African cultural heritage, which Alvin Ailey exploited and developed. The Russian ballet goes thought it was breathtaking and interesting.

*Q: Rostropovich.*

*Q: Tom, on this the cultural side as well as sports and all are heavily supported by the government and what was happening cultural wise?*

PICKERING: Over the period of years that I was there the three and a half, four years, what happened, of course, was that Russian government ran into difficulties in financing almost every aspect of its budget. It was clear that government financing for cultural activities was beginning to decline, in large measure because Russia was attempting to focus as much as it could in social welfare activities on things that affecting the daily life and direct relationships with people. People found themselves on tighter budgets, no raises to meet the needs of inflation or no raises to meet the increasing costs of living that rose after communism fell. People in the art world left Russia, especially if they were extremely good. They could get away and most of them could find patrons elsewhere to take them on. They went off and did other things for a while. There was a general decline in professional standards and in performances, even though Russian interest remained high. Concerts were always extremely well attended and as was ballet. I didn't go to the theater, because my Russian wasn't good enough to attend. But I was told that theatre was still very popular and still went strong when I was there.

Russian interest in culture in no way had diminished. Young Russian interest in American popular culture was large and it increased over time, as they were able to get and the opportunity to see and hear more. It was fascinating as a cultural comment that Yeltsin in both of his political campaigns, but particularly in his second political campaign in 1996, also used cultural performances where he appeared and sometimes even danced to build popularity. I will never forget that.

*Q: I will never forget that sight of Yeltsin tried to...I'm not quite sure what it was...*

PICKERING: What he was doing was to reach out to the young Russians which was a real stretch!.

*Q: Whether it was a jog or something.*

PICKERING: Anyway he used it as part of his campaign technique. So that was there. I think people much more skilled than I in this area should comment on the development of Russian literature, but there was certainly a great deal of continuing interest in writing. Solzhenitsyn came back and made his famous trip on the Siberian railway across Russia. That was obviously a political statement as well as it was the return of a literary hero, someone who had like Sakharov and others pushed out by the communists. Culture and politics were intimately inter-mixed in Russia.

*Q: Was there...were you getting from your cultural officers and all, was there no longer would be I guess a protest but an anti-establishment theater or a song or development or anything of that nature?*

PICKERING: Well it certainly wasn't something that I had immediately called to my attention in part because the establishment had changed.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: Then instead of the central focus on them being them, it became us. So saying sarcastic things about it or critical things about it became less attractive.

*Q: Well then...*

PICKERING: Why don't we go on to FSNs and talk a little bit about...

*Q: Explain what FSNs are.*

PICKERING: Foreign Service Nationals. These are what our British friends call locally engaged staff, which I understand now, is catching on in the State Department. It's individuals hired by the Department of State through our embassies overseas who are usually of local nationality, sometimes third country nationality, but not American citizens and who provide the bulk of our support in embassies. They work in everything from driving to administration. In many cases we hire extremely astute political and economic observers who provide assessments. As you probably remember some years before, during the Reagan administration, we had one of those periodic clean outs of Russians we considered to be spies here in the United States.

*Q: This is the Sergeant Lonetree, oh no, this is later...*

PICKERING: This was later, but I'm not sure that the juxtaposition is correct and I was not deeply involved in Soviet affairs at the time. Anyway, several hundred disappeared from the roles from the Russian embassy and consulates in the United States and maybe from the Russian Mission to the UN and Russians on the UN staff itself were PNG'd (persona non grata -- an unwelcome person). As a result, the Russians retaliated and in effect took away the locally engaged staff at the American embassy. We no longer had the benefit of several hundred Russians who had been working for us. They were managed through something called the UPDK, the Service for the Support of the Administrative Service for the Diplomatic Corps which was nominally under the Foreign Ministry, but we all believed was in effect in one way or another co-opted as part from the KGB, the Committee for State Security (the national intelligence organization). As a result, we all understood that during Soviet days they were there to keep an eye on us.

In terms what happened, we had an emergency program to replace those missing Russians. For a period of time, our regular diplomats did the housekeeping functions to the extent that they could. In the meantime, we went to Pacific Architects and Engineers, a contractor, and began to use them to hire on contract, if we could find them, Russian-speaking Americans. Some were youngsters immediately out of college -- to come over on contract and do these jobs. We had a two-tiered system, a contractor support system in the embassy of 80 or 90 or 100 people, and we had the regular direct hire U.S. employees of State, USIA, AID and the domestic agencies who were represented there. By the time I arrived, we had begun with the new Russian Yeltsin administration to replace our contractors as rapidly as we could with the hire of Russians. Contractors were enormously expensive. Just getting an American over there was a kind of a minimum of \$100 thousand a year and then more. Some of them were very helpful and they did

consular functions (they could not issue visas), they did administrative functions, they did driving and things of that sort. From the security perspective, the security people liked it because they thought it presented a more controlled atmosphere. We then in a sense managed our risk. When we started re-hiring, we divided the embassy physically and had one area that was open to Russian employees and one area that was completely closed to manage our security situation.

The hiring had begun and we had about 30. When I left we had several years later over 300. Hiring them began without having to go through the UPDK and so we did the hiring openly and we interviewed. This was a difficult problem replacing these American who themselves had been a difficult problem in terms of orientation, getting them to know and understand what the jobs were and to fit into Russia without the discipline, if I can put it that way, of a regular diplomatic assignment and career professional status. We had some who had become personnel problems. Bringing the Russians on initially worked very well. We did, from time to time, have what I would call slips, where Russians who were faithful were also figuring out ways to make extra money and wanted to pilfer and sell for personal profit, things like appliances that the embassy had ordered. They figured out ways to do this that escaped notice for a while until we were able to inspect and check-up and then we had to let some go.

We also had a very difficult problem because the State Department expected us to absorb all these new Foreign Service nationals without any support for training programs. In effect we were required as we were taking on new people and letting contract Americans go, also to take on the added burden of training. We were doing this at a time when the embassy was expanding, as you can imagine, very, very rapidly and very widely the scope of its activities. We had had no cooperative projects to speak of with rare exceptions under the Soviet Union. While after the fall we had an enormous number of cooperative projects. We also had a situation in which the number of visitors multiplied where we had something like four or five visits during my time from both President Clinton and an equal number from Vice President Gore. I will get into the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission activity, but needless to say it was heavily taxing and extremely hard.

*Q: You are saying that cooperative project, what do you mean by that?*

PICKERING: Well I mean we agreed that we would work together in a wide range of activities from health to space, to energy technology in doing joint research. They were cooperative efforts to deal with particular problems; some in arms control were very sensitive. Then we launched an AID program. One interesting aspect was that the US military began to offer to provide what were essentially big military field hospitals in storage in Western Europe against the danger of an all-out war with the Soviets. Over a period of time and these came to Russia in train loads; four or five of these entire hospitals were sent out and most of the equipment came to Russia. It was used to equip Russian hospitals all over the country, but to begin with in Moscow. Russian hospitals then were woefully under equipped and they found ways to make use of all of this.

*Q: Was the army or somebody sending people to tell them how to use the equipment and all?*

PICKERING: Yes, I think we were able to do that. We sent teams over with the military who were able to do it and came equipped with Russian language and for the Russians most of their



higher quality medical people had English. It worked out fairly well, but that's just one tiny example of all the things that were going on. We had a long and interesting cooperative program on fusion energy research which got a boost at that particular period of time. It was very high quality science cooperation on fusion -- building fusion reactors.

*Q: Did that go anywhere?*

PICKERING: Well it's still continuing and is a reasonably big international project and the U.S. has stayed in it but the Russians are playing a major role. They did some of the earliest research and some of the basic information on fusion research was developed by them. A number of basic terms, Tokomak Reactor, came from Russia. Anyway we are getting far afield on FSNs but these projects became increasingly important.

When I arrived in Moscow, we had the consulate general in Leningrad, now changed to St. Petersburg, and we had opened in Vladivostok a consulate general after the fall of communism. Then during my time we opened the consulate general in Yekaterinburg in the Urals which had been renamed after the fall of communism. It was Sverdlovsk in the communist period. It is the place near which Francis Gary Powers came down in his U2 or without his U2, I should say. It was also where the Tsarist royal family was murdered.

But in any event, this was also a challenge. These were difficult working conditions in these provincial new cities, but extremely important for us. We had a whole series of extremely able people, sometimes husband and wife teams, who went out. I can remember taking Ron Brown to Yekaterinburg...

*Q: Secretary of Commerce.*

PICKERING: Then Secretary of Commerce out to Yekaterinburg. The consul general and the second husband a wife team were there, Jack Segal and his wife. It was fascinating because Jack was able to bring together about twelve provincial governors that he had gone out and met all over the Ural region in his consular district for meetings with Ron Brown. He brought a series of American businessmen out. It was an interesting opening to see how suddenly in this area of Russia that had been formerly closed to the United States for such a long period, a few enterprising officers living under, difficult conditions could make such progress. I can tell you, they worked out of apartments, sometimes out of places where they were all crammed in. We didn't have many, but we had several working on a family basis. No facilities were yet in place for offices but they were tremendously valuable to us and helping in opening up our relationships with Russia. That continues to this day. They were able to comment on what they saw in the way of political developments, on the conditions of life, on what was going in and around their own towns -- insights we had never before had from central Siberia and beyond. We found Russians who were highly computer literate even though in effect the Internet was just beginning to impact in Russia.

*Q: What were you getting \_\_\_\_\_ in Vladivostok? It is pretty far away and the Soviet Union was broken up. Was there any thought that might move apart?*

PICKERING: Oh sure, when I was there at first there were all over Russia people who were deeply anguished by the loss of the constituent republics of the former Soviet Union -- places like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States. They saw this as the beginning of what one could say was the unhinging or the disintegration of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation has 89 constituent units to it, 22 of which under Stalin were in effect republics -- the higher grade of administrative subdivision -- they had their own flags, anthems, and presidents which were mainly based around ethnic minorities. Some of them pretty nominal. There were four or five that were based on Finno-Ugric speaking areas where the number of local language speakers in places like Udmurtia, were less than ten percent. But some were Muslim in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, some were Buddhist in Kalmykia, some were Mongols in Buryatia. There was a fear that some of these would break off, particularly the Muslims would try to do so. They were afraid, in fact, because it happened at the time of the revolution, because of the sheer distance of to the far eastern coast, folks would hived themselves off into local nominally independent units. There are only ten million people in the 1990s, east of Lake Baikal -- a vast area with tremendous resources.

Vladivostok gave us an open window in what was going on in the center of the Russian far east. The Khabarovsk oblast and Primorsky Krai contain most of the population on the Pacific coast and most of the industry and activity. It was extremely interesting to be able to watch the governor who had a lot of power and who had his own ideas of where things were going and where relations were going in that area. We had a significant number of Peace Corps volunteers at that point in far eastern Russia. Our consulate general was a base or place from which to operate. We had the beginning of some assistance projects and we had the beginning of commercial development particularly with Alaska. Alaskan Airlines began to fly to Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and to Magadan among other places. Those connections opened up. There were fishing issues, if I can put it that way to say the least. There was a wide range of things that was happening out in that part of the world, which the consulate general gave us tremendous opportunity to keep track of. The Pacific northwest and especially Seattle, Washington was also interested in the Russian far east region and developed its own relationships there.

There was a big Korean population in Khabarovsk and around Vladivostok. A lot of them more inclined to the north than to the Republic of Korea. We worked closely with our Republic of Korea friends as they set up a consulate general too to keep track of what was going on. The Far Eastern fleet was based on Vladivostok and was slowly disintegrating. We started a series of joint military exercises including with our Navy and Marines and elements of the Far Eastern fleet. Some involved joint exercises on dealing with civil emergencies and took place in Hawaii and around Vladivostok.

*Q: Was there...*

PICKERING: There was, I will also say, the beginning of a very large investment in Sakhalin where Western technology was really required at that stage to pull oil out of the rather deep-sea near Arctic development off the east coast of Sakhalin.

*Q: Well now did you get involved or was it an issue being Russia the, what do they call them, the northern islands of Japan or something?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, very much so. The Japanese ambassador had been very close to us. Strobe worked on it in Washington with their Embassy here. We suggested in a number of talks, ideas on how to deal with the issue. We were supportive of the return of the islands to Japan. We had almost no influence with the Russians on that. The Japanese were trying to secure the return of the four most southern Kuril Islands occupied by Russia at the end of the Second World War. Japan saw them as part of their homeland -- a major issue. But, in the aftermath of the loss of all this territory by the Soviet Union in 1919, Russian politicians, including Yeltsin, who was popular at that time, were loath to take on the issue which they saw as a loser even though these islands were lightly populated by Russians. They had quite a valuable fishery resources and some thought that they may have still been thinking that they may be able access to undersea hydrocarbons by hanging on to them. But, the Russians were determined not to give them up even though they didn't spend much time and money on them. They had fairly constant brushes with the Japanese over fishing in the local waters because it was not clearly demarcated as to where the waters around Hokkaido ended and Russian waters around these four islands began.

*Q: They were a great boon to our policy for years. They kept the Japanese apart from any kind of deal with the Soviets.*

PICKERING: The Japanese were beginning to understand that they had to deal with the new Russian states. Trade opened up between Japan and the Russian Far East. It was fascinating that Japanese used cars sold like hot cakes and the Russians had a deal where merchant seamen could bring back on as deck cargo one used car per trip for each sailor for sale in Russia as a kind of personal perk. So, all of the Russian Far East became fairly rapidly populated by Japanese cars with the wheel over on the right side -- not a very safe driving arrangement when you have to drive on that side of the road. We even began to see them as they came all the way into western Russia on the Trans Siberian railroad. Those cars showed up in and around Moscow and in central Russia.

The consulates and the FSNs were all important to us. I had hoped in my time in Russia that we could open up another small post between Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok, probably around Irkutsk or Novosibirsk. There was a huge area that was still only very lightly covered and which represented a significant amount of Russian economic activity, potential business development and an important place for us to be located. I used to visit out there whenever I could. I visited places like Chita as well as Irkutsk and Novosibirsk and then further to the west in Tomsk. Some of the very large cities we rarely got to. We tried to go often and I had the thought very early on that -- look in the 19<sup>th</sup> century we had a huge number of consulates all around the world often run by one American -- often not a professional, sometimes ship captains who had retired or ship factors. I thought why not do that... what a wonderful place for a Foreign Service officer, single, who has Russian who wants to start working on his own why not send him out to a place like Novosibirsk. I went and visited a number of these places and talked to the governors. They were very happy to receive us, were prepared to provide us housing, but I really couldn't get it through the department because the department was very rigid in its views, it was going to be treated like opening a new consulate -- with lots of consultations with Congress and so on.

Subsequently, when I was under secretary, I worked with Felix Rohatyn in Paris, who actually had started these small posts. Felix was prepared, as I was, to pull people out of Embassy Paris to open these places. I was able to help him from Washington. He opened up four or five of these so-called single American presence posts in France as the initial experiment. Now the department has caught on to this and likes the idea and the secretary's transformational diplomacy report (Condoleezza Rice) showed strong support for the approach. I think that she's now already working on some forty of these posts around the world. To me this is an enormous opportunity. I thought it was a great way for us to begin to open up in Russia.

The other problem with it was not only was the department rigid in not being able to open new consulates and closely tied to having to get the Congress to approve them and unwilling to pick up the cudgel and get the Congress to see the value of this, but every time we suggested one, every domestic agency in the U.S. government wanted to attach somebody. So that if I had sent one person out that individual would suddenly become the manager and administrator and not able to do any work. That was not in my view of what we were seeking. We needed to hold the line and I think happily now that's become the operational mode, which is helpful. In those days, the domestic agencies could attach people for free, now they have to pay a buy-in fee, which helps to reduce the proliferation of domestic agency people overseas.

So I think maybe we should turn to the Internet.

*Q: All right.*

PICKERING: As we are moving along here, it was interesting Moscow had very little Internet access. One of the things that George Soros did that maybe will have more effect in the long term in Russia than anything that anybody else has done was to put 100m into getting the internet in Russia...

*Q: You might explain who he is.*

PICKERING: George is a Hungarian-American, remarkably successful as an investor and as someone who basically made a lot of money out of currency trading. George put a lot of that money to work and reportedly spent about \$100 million to help the Russian University system in particular develop access to the Internet. The Russians themselves over a period of time developed a fiber optic backbone for the country, a kind of east-west hook-up. That combination has meant that the Internet has penetrated very widely in Russia and Russians generally have a growing access.

The Russians were always very interested in computers and computer technology, mainly for military purposes during the Soviet days. Their people were well trained. The Russians had enormous capabilities through their traditional strong interest in higher math and their abilities to use that interest to develop new approaches, new ideas in the ways of thinking especially about software development. It was interesting that we denied hardware to the Russians in the Cold War and they fell behind us very quickly in computer hardware, but they managed to use this math skill and their development of software programming using higher math skills to overcome some of the hardware disadvantages. The Russians in effect came out of the Cold War with

maybe a more versatile, more agile, more innovative skill at programming at the higher end. Interesting enough they've taken advantage of that. That was only kind of lightly known at the time I was there, but it was beginning. But a keen Russian interest particularly among Russian youth in computer technology, the rapid movement of a number of American companies in that area to Russia to set up shop and develop some of this has also helped. Many companies bring Russians to the United States who had these capabilities. The opening up of the internet and the development very early on in Moscow of a fiber-optic ring around the town using the subway system for access all became new ways to put Russia in the information-technology age. Young Russians were beginning to do this and some started up companies very successfully. Russia, in effect, has its own Bill Gates who has done very well in this business and remains a close adviser to the President.

*Q: Bill Gates is the person who developed Microsoft.*

PICKERING: Microsoft. He is the wealthiest American today and someone who did extremely well with this software. His Russian counterpart has named his company Luxoft and works for IBM and Boeing.

*Q: Did you see the Internet developing into a political instrument? Because it certainly in places like China and all over there you lose some control over the information processes as a way of bypassing...*

PICKERING: I think so. Because of my lack of good Russian language skills I didn't follow closely what's been going on in that area, but it seems to me in general if the Internet represents now, you know, all these years later, a new alternative way of broadcasting information and exchanging ideas and political opinions. They are very adept and interested. The Russians, at least to the best of my knowledge, have not tried the way the Chinese have to clamp down on the internet and so it does provide for a young Russian an extremely important mechanism for staying in touch. It was interesting we talked about exchanges, student exchanges, it's been interesting that one of the things that we emphasized was to bring a large number of Russian students to the States and smaller numbers of Americans to Russia particularly where they could handle the language. The Russian returnee students themselves, using the Internet and sometimes because we also tended to recruit them in groups from particular areas of Russia, organized their own alumni groups and stayed in touch with each other and with the Americans they met by the Internet.

The Internet provided the mechanism for a whole new range of activities previously unknown in the Soviet days. In many ways these were political exchanges but it worked for the spawning also of new institutions in Russia, something called the Moscow School of Political Studies with which I've had an association. I used to speak there when I was the ambassador. It was started then by a young woman who was extremely interested in making sure that Russians knew about modern political developments and about democratic policies and democratic behavior and democratic bureaucratic approaches. So four or five times a year she would get 150 young Russian political leaders from all over the country together for a course on the subjects just mentioned. A large amount of this was glued together with Internet communications and identifying people who are up and coming. So when you go to speak there, she'll have

everything in the room of 150 from 10 Chechens to people from as far away as Chukotka, or as nearby as the Moscow suburbs -- all of whom are local legislators, political leaders of potential note and judges. It's really a fascinating opportunity to talk to huge cross-sections of young Russians about what's going on.

*Q: Did you find speaking of the Internet and communications had the sort of the communications revolution and all hit the embassy at this time?*

PICKERING: At the beginning, as it was only beginning to hit Russia, not much. I noticed it much more pervasively when I came back as under secretary and then it was more prevalent in the department. Of course, we were under restrictions with respect to the electronic equipment we could use in the embassy still because of in fact the deep concern that in Soviet days a lot of this stuff got penetrated. So there were restrictions that applied in Moscow that may not have applied elsewhere and even though the regime had changed, the security services remained entrenched and intact. As a result we were limited. I don't know how many individual members of the embassies had their own personal computers. I know that we were very careful about what we put in the secured spaces in the embassy. I don't think that in those days that we allowed any device or material that could have outside communications. We fire walled a lot of what we had and we used the standard embassy telegram encryption systems and the secure phone. The secure phone was a popular instrument for communications. It had its own limitations. You had to be in an area where your end of the conversation couldn't be eavesdropped if you wanted the kind of security where you didn't want anybody else to know what you were talking about.

Yes, I think I have said before, but I assumed that Spaso House where I lived was perfectly open to anybody who wanted to listen in. There was no way to protect against that. I was just not sure that the embassy in its own range of activities was all that safe. For most of the premises, we just operated on the basis that since most of what we were doing was told to the Russians as part of our working together, and most of what we were saying and telling Washington was also obvious, there were very few things that were probably worth spending a whole lot of time and money keeping out of their hands. Those few things we did take a lot of time and care to protect.

*Q: Well then what's next? Clinton visits.*

PICKERING: Clinton visits. I think we talked about the Internet, the consulates, the FSNs and some of the cultural activities. On the Clinton visits I had the particularly good fortune even before I was confirmed as ambassador to attend the first Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Vancouver in April of 1993. At that meeting and in the preparation for it which I was engaged, Strobe had an awfully interesting idea. It was one of a number of ideas, I think we may have talked about it before but that was to find two individuals at high level who were in effect could look after the U.S.-Russian relationship on a fairly regular basis and lend their prestige, influence and own knowledge and leadership to the relationship as it evolved. Obviously Vice President Gore was an extremely important candidate for this and the president approved it. The president as I think I may have mentioned suggested this at dinner to President Yeltsin in Vancouver; we were sitting around the table. When he suggested that Vice President Gore would be the opposite number Yeltsin sort of turned white because, of course, Yeltsin had then a Vice President who was up in arms against him and who would be leaving.

*Q: That was a general with a moustache?*

PICKERING: No, it was Ruskoy. In any event, he led the revolt later at the Russian White House in October of '93. So we had expected this and Clinton was ready. He said, "No, no, no, you can choose anyone that you want and certainly we will be happy with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin who was then and still remained in Yeltsin's good graces and from Yeltsin's point of view a dependable guy. What it involved really was the setting up a series of activities between us to oversee and indeed promote U.S.-Russian cooperation. We nominally had between a half dozen and a dozen cabinet officers who were asked to and picked up pieces of the Russian relationship, Donna Shalala did the health business, we had various energy secretaries work on energy, agriculture was very important and so on and once or twice a year we would meet either in Washington or in Moscow and the cabinet members would come together and they were in effect to provide a report to the group about what had been going on in their sector, what activities were undertaken, what had been accomplished, what they had jointly worked on and the problems. Education was included certainly -- all the obvious cooperating areas. The military was involved; Bill Perry who was then secretary of defense participated. So it became an extremely important mechanism, if you like, for giving what I would call a boost to the relationship -- a real push.

We even had a private sector add-on so that we would bring over significant leading CEOs in private sector activities who could meet with Russians or from the Russian side at least a combination of bureaucrats and government company leaders. But it worked and in those places where it worked well we made a lot of steps forward in various areas. But it hit a note of purpose for the Russians, the sense of an entirely changed relationship for them, a new opening with access to American's who had technology, who had money to invest and who had ideas that were different from theirs. I think it was done on a respectful basis although we tended to bring more to the table in terms of innovation and what was new. The Russians brought more to the table in terms of opportunity and access to natural resources and things of that sort. But it became a very important way of working. It also led to cabinet visits in between where U.S and Russian cabinet members would meet with their chief folks who came along with them and work on these various problem areas and see if they could move ahead.

The areas that moved less well were things like military conversion where the Russians had a tendency to think that these would become new money making ventures for the military and that we would invest in it and we would pay for most of it and they could sit back and have a free ride. The things they were interested in were military housing. We were interested in kind of converting factories that used to make missiles to airplanes or something different. It was very hard. Russians were loath obviously to unlimber rapidly to the big industrial base and certainly were suspicious of the fact that this was being done solely for the advantage of the United States either politically or commercially.

*Q: This is Tape 20, Side 1, with Tom Pickering.*

PICKERING: They wanted the relationship to be solely in the area of free grant aid for them to convert, while they were not willing to make serious changes in their military structure or

hierarchy as a result. Those were areas that were most difficult although we did make progress in a number of arms control steps with the Russians over a period of time. We dealt with a number of serious problems, including the concern we had about their support for giving the Indians a maneuvering reentry vehicle engine to go with a third stage space vehicle through their space cooperation. We developed cooperation on the space station over a period of time.

We had some health programs that I thought were useful although the health ministry was usually dominated by military doctors who wanted to do fancy operations and not mother and child health. It took a long while to get going together. In the meanwhile, the Russian health system deteriorated. Educational cooperation began although we had the idea we knew everything and they had the idea that we thought we knew everything. In effect there were large numbers of things we could have incorporated in our educational system to our benefit from the Russian side, particularly in secondary education in math and sciences. So there were differences there.

But my thoughts were that it was a good system. It helped to increase the value and focus of the embassy's work; it helped to raise the level of our joint activities. It helped to keep each of us considerate and understanding of each other at a time that was important to do so. We were attempting to grow together rather than apart as a result of the differences over the Cold War and the Soviet Union. Each side could point to accomplishments which were to its benefit, something that has now died away now.

*Q: You say you want to stop so we'll let's see what are the things we want to pick up?*

PICKERING: Well we have more of the Gore-Chernomyrdin relationship, then you'll have to read your...

*Q: My handwriting in here...the trafficking of women.*

PICKERING: Of women we will talk about that.

*Q: Our relation and our relations with the near abroad...*

PICKERING: The near abroad and other questions.

*Q: And all that. The other thing is, I wonder if you could give a reading of at least how you read Clinton when he first came and saw...*

PICKERING: Sure and we may talk about subsequent Clinton visits too and how they worked.

*Q: Because he'd been in the...he'd gone to meetings and all but he was not a man who had been in the world arena particularly and his study and how he approached this...*

PICKERING: Absolutely, I would be happy to do this.

*Q: And also the breakup of Yugoslavia and what was happening there and how that related to it.*



*Q: Today is the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2007. We've got quite a list including...before we move on I was asked by I think it was Tom Switzer or somebody else who heard you by reputation talk about your driving. I'm told that Colin Powell said he never wanted to let you drive. Apparently you're a fast driver.*

PICKERING: Well I got a reputation, I don't know if it is fully earned or not for fast driving, although mainly I think on the other side of that reputation is that I love to drive, I drive myself. I drove many long trips in the desert both in Jordan and all over the Middle East and then in Africa and then in Russia. So I supposed that the fast driving is conflated with the long driving too in one way or another. I think that probably my fast driving is a little more now tempered by things like speed limits and cops.

*Q: We don't have steppes and savannas in deserts.*

PICKERING: No, less to drive over but I would say that beginning in Jordan I enjoyed driving myself when I could, although I had a driver and he was very trustworthy and very able. But occasionally on a long trip I would drive at least some of the distance. We tended to make pretty good time as we went along. There was not a lot of traffic in those days on the Jordanian roads, although by 1975 with the huge expansion in Saudi Arabia marked a lot of heavy traffic with large trucks stimulated by increasing oil prices. As a result Saudi ports were clogged with imports and there was a huge amount of truck traffic transiting Jordan from Europe going into Saudi Arabia. People were shipping goods of all kinds from Europe so that made the roads more jammed and dangerous.

But then I would add that I'd done a number of long trips from Jordan. I drove to Yemen, which was unusual and somewhat difficult. We went down sort the mountain spine of Saudi Arabia, we stopped in Tabuk and then in Jeddah and then we camped out in Khamis Mushayt in southern Saudi Arabia up in the mountains. Then we went into Yemen in a way we didn't know, but the Saudi's showed us a way and gave us a guide. Then we got on this road that the Saudi's and the Yemeni royalists had built in the '60s when the Egyptians had invaded and they were fighting the Egyptians. It was a kind of hand-built track over some very rough mountains. We camped out at least one night in northern Yemen, visited some remote areas and actually found some scattered remnants of the ancient Yemeni Jewish community in north Yemen. They had been left behind when most of that community had come out through Aden in the 1950s in an airlift the Israelis had developed with UK cooperation through Aden. Then we went down to Salalah and Sanaa and visited southern Yemen and drove back on the coast of Yemen which was difficult as there was no road just sandy tracks. Parts of it were fairly tricky to go over. We came into Saudi Arabia on the coastal side on the Yemeni boarder near Maydi and then drove up to Abha again and then drove back along the mountain spine. So it was an absolutely fascinating trip and an extremely interesting one. We had some difficulty with a punctured gas tank, repaired with my wife's large supply of chewing gum and duct tape. In Khamis Mushayt on the return we found an experienced welder from Aden who agreed to fix the tank. We took it off the vehicle for him, and he used his own car exhaust to fill the empty gas tank with exhaust fumes before trying to braise it for us. He was amazed that we knew how to get the tank off and on so quickly, but we had already done it a few times!

We camped a lot of the time on that trip. I drove as well the year before to Oman across Saudi Arabia and then across the stretch of the empty quarter that borders the Arabian Gulf.

*Q: Rub' al-Khali.*

PICKERING: Rub' al-Khali. That was difficult traveling and we had some trouble. Our car got sunk into...

*Q: When you say car what are you talking about?*

PICKERING: We drove four-wheel drive Chevrolet carry-alls and one car got stuck in a "sabkha" which is essentially a strip of coastal beach where there is water underneath and where, in fact, the sand on top, and right underneath is followed by a very soft water-soaked sand that's a little bit like wet plaster of Paris. While it looked like it would bear weight and there were tracks where it had borne weight of other vehicle, when we went on it the car began to sink. The reputation is that it will swallow whole vehicles. Actually ours stopped sinking for a while and my wife who was out looking around found for us some large sheet metal pieces which were sides of old trucks that somebody else had used to extract themselves. We had one vehicle on safe ground so a combination of jacks, cables and these metal plates that we found, these big tin plates, allowed us to extract ourselves. We had to unload the vehicle and to get it out. It took most of two hours to extract ourselves. We didn't try that again I can tell you. We stayed in fairly well marked tracks; there was no real road there it was just desert tracks.

The desert track in the Rub al-Khali was interesting because as you went down the desert track going from north to south there were signs that somebody had put up which had a skull and cross bones on the right hand side and an arrow on the left hand side pointing straight ahead. So you were warned not to kind of venture too far off the route toward the west and the interior.

We also visited on that same trip Bahrain which was not then connected to the mainland by a causeway. We flew over, then went on north to Kuwait and then drove back on the main road that parallels the TAP line pipeline from Kuwait across Saudi Arabia right along the Iraqi border until we came into Jordan. I think on our last night of the trip about five o'clock in the afternoon the axle came off my vehicle in Jordan. Happily we had an HF radio that we could contact the embassy. They sent a truck to pick up the vehicle. We had a second vehicle that we could all but my son and I rode in it to a desert police station where they got picked up.

*Q: So you left behind your mechanic shaking his head about a crazy ambassador.*

PICKERING: Well we had no mechanic. We were the mechanics. But we recovered the wheel and the axle that had come off and later put it back on the car. What else did we do? When I was in Nigeria we drove across the Sahara up and back in January of 1983 for 26 days, which was an absolutely fascinating trip. We went from Lagos to Algiers and returned with relatively few difficulties. But we had to do a lot of our own maintenance. We did all of our own driving and all of our own navigating without GPS -- just a collection of large and small scale maps. We

camped out I think 18 out of 26 nights on that trip. We took two vehicles. I never went to the desert in a serious way with less than two vehicles; it was not a good practice.

*Q: Did you in your driving take defensive driving courses?*

PICKERING: I did in Jordan because of the security issues.

*Q: Yeah that is what I am saying.*

PICKERING: Yes the department sent security people out and we took defensive driving courses. I learned how to make J turns and things like that. I'm not sure I still remember how to do it and happily I never had an opportunity or need to employ that in earnest

I guess the other thing is when I was in Russia in 1995 we drove to Central Asia which was absolutely fascinating. And again with a couple of vehicles and had a very interesting trip. That trip was interesting because some "friends" kind of labeled it and got it into the Washington Post as a boondoggle. Actually, it was an extremely useful trip for me as ambassador to Russia to have a chance to see what Central Asia was like and also talk to the leaders, to our Ambassadors in those countries. It was a relatively inexpensive way to do that if a little bit difficult and tiring.

On the way back in the middle of the night we had a breakdown of the vehicles and put one of them on a flatbed truck, which we rented. I never drove at night but the truck driver wanted to make up time and carry out his contract with us to move this vehicle and get back to his regular business. So we drove at night, but in the middle of the night we came across a barrier in the middle of the road in a place where the road was elevated above the desert in northern Kazakhstan. Obviously somebody wanted to stop traffic. This big Russian flat bed truck was ahead of us, a big 18-wheeler, and my interpreter was with the driver and we had radios between the vehicles. We also never traveled without radios between the vehicles. So he said the driver is going to back up a bit and break through the barrier which was old tin, locks and tires, so you stay behind. We were in the other vehicle which had a trailer so we both backed up until our trailer began to turn sideways and we said, "Well we can't back up any more." He said, "That's ok, we are going to go ahead and break through this barrier and you just follow us." As he did we could see all kinds of people who had been hiding by the side of the road rise up on the side as we took off. We went through the barrier behind him; it was old iron and stones and stuff like that and punctured a tire. I just said to the fellow who was driving you'll have no trouble driving on the rim we have plenty of extra rims and tires and I used to do it in Jordan in the desert. So we rode about six kilometers on the rim until we got to a place where we could change the tire. But the Kazakh truck driver said that it was a serious problem driving at night in that area. He didn't like to do it but he figured he'd be OK and we'd be OK if he did. He said, "I won't do that again." But he said people had been both robbed and some people had been killed along the road so it was not the kind of thing that we wanted to repeat. The Washington Post published the follow up story too so it didn't look like so much of a boondoggle anymore!.

*Q: OK, well back to other things. Gore-Chernomyrdin you know this is a greatly touted relationship. From your perspective how did this work?*

PICKERING: I thought it worked reasonably well and that it had the advantage of creating another channel which was a little bit south of the president. Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Vice President Gore got along well and were able to discuss issues and indeed resolve some difficult issues working together. At the same time, each of them was able to bring together cabinet officials from both sides who were working together on a significant number of joint projects in everything from cooperation on energy and health to dealing with some of the security issues, problems of defense conversion, for example.

That meant, in fact, that we had a fairly sustained effort with support at the top for continuing this relationship with the Russians despite, I think, Russian mythology subsequently that this was a one-way diktat by the United State or the furtherance of interventionist assistance to Russia. It was very much a two-way street and the commission exemplified that. Anybody who knew Prime Minister Chernomyrdin knew that he wasn't someone who was going to accept diktats from anybody. He and Vice President Gore got along well, because they had a sense of mutual understanding and they worked hard to accommodate the interests of both countries. One of the numerous things that that helped very early on in my effort was it began to provide a framework for the settlement of the very difficult issue in which the United States opposed the provision by Russia to India of a third stage space maneuvering engine. It would have given the Indians very considerable strategic capability for creation of maneuvering re-entry vehicles for military weapons which we believed was contrary both to the missile technology control regime and also our common interest. This all happened before the Indian nuclear tests in 1998, but at a time when both of us were concerned about proliferation and to end the proliferation of advanced military capabilities.

The Gore-Chernomyrdin forum was also useful in creating a small working group on sensitive areas of cooperation. Working in that forum, particularly in a very close group -- most of the meetings were attended on our side by Vice President Gore and by Leon Fuerth, who was the VPs national security adviser, and by me and often by no one else on our side and on the Russian side by a similar small group. We worked out with the Russians what they would do with respect to outstanding military contracts that they had signed with Iran. In the end, with extremely tough work by Vice President Gore, they gave us a list of the contracts after which once they were fulfilled they would no longer provide additional military equipment to Iran. This was a considerable assistance in our efforts to hem in Iran's military expansion. This was not nuclear material, that was another area, but conventional equipment. We also worked in the Gore-Chernomyrdin forum to shut down as much as we could Russian nuclear support to Iran. It would have gone if carried out, well beyond the permitted international arrangements. The Russians at one point, through their Atomic Energy Commission, had made what looked like a deal to provide very sensitive items to the Iranian nuclear program. With pressures from the top, both President Clinton and Vice President Gore, we were able to shut down those kinds of programs, programs to provide heavy-water reactors, to provide enrichment technology assistance and things of that sort.

*Q: Well what was in it for the Russians? Why had they gotten into this?*

PICKERING: The Russians got into this because they could make money from Iran. They got into it with us because they saw the need for U.S. support. This was at a time when their

economy was totally on its knees and unemployment was very high. They needed our help to attempt to build themselves back economically. So joint projects and cooperative efforts, the opening of trade, all of those kinds of things provided significant value on the Russian side. The Russians were interested in looking at that, -- everything from health technology to new developments in energy conservation, to assistance which they wanted very much to help their military convert some of their military facilities. Essentially they were very, very short of military housing. They had brought a large number of troops and officers back from Germany and they were particularly concerned by the officer corps which had heavily depended on state support for its housing. So this rough change, as they saw it, from living fairly high on the hog in East Germany as a post-occupation force to going back home into tents was a shock. In Germany their military was heavily subsidized I think not only by the Soviets themselves but by the East Germans. That all went to a situation where they were all cast loose in Russia with almost no facilities. It was of great concern to them. Those programs were less successful from the Russian point of view but certainly there was an incentive on the Russian side to seek help in this area.

The Russians also developed in connection with us -- in connection with the Gore-Chernomyrdin effort -- a private sector forum; one that President Yeltsin used frequently to brief on where he was going and what he wanted to do and seek advice from them. There were a significant number of senior American CEOs (chief executive officers) who participated in that forum. In effect, they helped to contribute ideas to the Russians. The Russians also looked at these CEOs as potential investors. While the Russians were of mixed mind on foreign investment, they, over the long term, understood and believed that some of this would certainly help them in stimulating economic recovery and creating jobs, which at the end of Communism, was a Russia pretty much on its knees.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the Chernomyrdin and Yeltsin relationship?*

PICKERING: Sure, it was very, very interesting to observe the relationships between them. In every sense of the word Chernomyrdin acted and portrayed himself as a loyal prime minister and I think he was. He stayed on for a very long period of time. I never saw any evidence that he went beyond his mandate in any way at all. He and Yeltsin had close arrangements. If there was distrust or if there was a lack of confidence or if there was an effort on Chernomyrdin's part to break away and pursue a political future for himself on his own, none of us saw it. Generally speaking in Russia even if you had no strong verifiable information, the rumor circuit was rife and operating very intensively. It would generally point up those types of things. But while Chernomyrdin wasn't necessarily selected as Yeltsin's heir apparent, for a long while he seemed possibly to be in that position. He, of course, had been a very successful bureaucrat in Soviet days and then had come out of GASPROM, the major gas collecting, transporting and vending organization in Russia. It was certainly one of Russia's largest public companies. It was presumed he had to have done very, very well financially there. He seemed not to be in straightened circumstances in any way at all. He stayed on for quite a while and then was replaced, and ended up as ambassador to Ukraine, where I think he still is the Russian ambassador to the Ukraine. In the meantime, for a long time he was seen to have given loyal service to Yeltsin. Yeltsin's replacement of Chernomyrdin was more a question of perhaps appealing to other factions within the government than it was necessarily any heavy dissatisfaction with Chernomyrdin's performance.

*Q: Trafficking of women, I mean, so this is sort of a new theme in my oral histories and particularly coming out of, well obviously Asia but particularly, what was the Soviet Union and its satellites going to Europe and all, Ukrainian women, Russian women and some children boys too but mainly women. Did this come up? How did you play this?*

PICKERING: Not as a major theme. We were only beginning to see the early evidence of this. There were huge amounts of dislocation in Russia as a result of economic hardship following and indeed at the beginning of the collapse of Communism in the late '80s. I'm certain that people were able to take advantage of looser controls over borders and things like that to engage in persuading women to take jobs overseas which ended up in putting them into prostitution. It was also true even though the Soviet Union had a fairly significant criminal element, big sections of it were infiltrated and operated by the Committee for State Security, the KGB, as part of their apparatus for controlling things. Indeed a big portion of this apparatus was put in place or at least came into place in order to make the economy work -- assuring through criminal fixers that spare parts and so forth came to factories to allow them to meet their quotas. There is big difference between trafficking women obviously, but these people crossed the border lines between what was an economic crime and what was a traditional, intending to operate and make money in both areas.

The fixers who made the economy work essentially operated within the Soviet economy, but attempted to rectify, repair or make up for the mistakes of GOSPLAN, which had the role of assuring adequate amounts of raw material to factories. Soviet factories were as much as possible completely integrated vertically and horizontally. They provided for all their own needs so they didn't have to depend on outside factories in other parts of Russia for any part of what was required to sustain their production. But where they did not get from the Soviet system what they needed, they went to these fixers behind the scenes to acquire assets for them and make sure it got delivered to the factories. If they needed copper, and copper was not available in the system, the system had failed to provide copper, a fixer would do that. Well these fixers became rich; they shared some of their riches with their KGB protectors who also saw their role as finding ways to make the economy work when the Communist system wouldn't make it work through traditional allocations by the center of assets and raw materials. As the system loosened, they became more broadly engaged in criminal activity. There always were criminals in Russian society as there are in most. It was a little harder go perhaps under the Soviet Union. Sometimes these were co-opted by the intelligence services as informers and enforcers in the system, if they weren't going to do it officially.

In any event, later they slipped into things like trafficking in women to everything from forgery to extortion to try to make the system work or to make the system work for them. The early beginnings were the loosening of controls which opened a market for this kind of activity. What was then flourishing and encouraged by Western Europe was to beguile young women by promising them nice jobs in the West at high salaries and then using criminal force to keep them under control while they did so. I had much more of a sense of seeing this first hand on a visit I made to Albania as under secretary of state. Albania was a major transit point and the source for young women passing through Albania from the very poor country of Moldavia. Moldavian women still are heavily victimized in this traffic. But there were people working in NGOs in

Albania at the time who in fact were able to locate these women and offer them shelter and then return to their original homes. The stories were pretty hard. Many of them were transported by a kind of boatlift across the straits between Albania and Italy and then once into the European Union moved around by the criminal organizations.

*Q: Was this as the ambassador at that time, was this a major element in which you were doing or was there anything you could do anyway?*

PICKERING: No, well it was hardly an element at all. First, I think we were only then beginning to see it. It was not a subject that had come into its own in Russia. It was something this country was concerned about. It was only the very beginnings of Russian involvement. It was more shadowy and elusive and was very hard rather to understand how pervasive and extensive it was. It was probably less so in the early '90s than it was in the later '90s and at the beginning of the new century. So I saw much more evidence of this as under secretary, three years later, than I did when I was in Russia.

*Q: One of the...*

PICKERING: It was also like corruption in many other processes that were going on in Russia and heavily mixed with corruption -- a difficult subject for the Russians themselves to deal with. Working alone in making the thing work was almost impossible. The official system had enough of what I would call back pressure built in against it because large amounts of money were being made out of corruption and trafficking. It was also part of what was obviously very deleterious to the Russian system.

*Q: What about then let's talk a little about the nearer abroad and the Russian relationship. Were you seeing a Russia that was looking to get back into essentially reestablish the Soviet empire or how...*

PICKERING: I think it was too close then to Yeltsin's decisions to break up the Soviet Union in 1991. Yeltsin had obviously played a very active role in the end of December 1991 in setting these countries free. There was an interest in developing a state-to-state relationship while continuing the CIS, the Conference of Independent States. This was the linking organization and doing that on a basis that there was a voluntary interest in having separate, newly independent countries working together, but not pushed back under Moscow's hegemony.

There were clearly Russians who were un-reconciled, for example, to the Baltic's having the full degree of freedom that they had achieved and who wanted to see the Baltic's forced into the CIS. The Balts resisted this so there was over a period of time a lot of Russian harassment. We played quite a useful role with the Baltic ambassadors in the embassy asking them to make sure that they did what they could to keep their own skirts clean while the Russians were pressing them. There was a tendency on their side to retaliate, particularly against the Russian population in their countries. Latvia had upwards of 40 percent Russian population in those days, it probably still is large. They could get harsh and difficult with the Russians among them to try to Latvianize them or Estonianize them -- force on them language requirements in order to stay. The Russians all wanted to stay; mainly in those areas, life was better, living conditions were

better, freedom was larger, the society was more open and more welcoming even against the backdrop of these problems. We also pushed the Russians hard to ease back on the Baltic states. Their pressure was not getting them anywhere and created a backlash for them in the region.

The other parts of the CIS, the leaders of the Central Asian states, while they considered themselves truly important independent leaders, also were careful to maintain their relationships on a personal basis with Yeltsin. Yeltsin was not aggressive in seeking to try to throw, if I can put it this way, new lassos around them. It was interesting for some time that in a number of these areas, the border guard service of Russia was employed in effect in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. There were Russian forces deployed certainly in Georgia and Armenia and to some extent in Azerbaijan as continuing legacies of that relationship. Working that out was hard, it still remains a problem for a lot of these countries.

It was also clear that at that period, as opposed to later under President Putin, there was a decline in Russian national feeling about its inherently imperial role in that part of the world. It was too closely associated with Soviet dominance and in people's minds too closely associated with Soviet practices to be popular. Gradually, over a period of time nationalism has returned. It's been the central feature of the Putin presidency that keeping Russia together, extending a stronger sense of national feeling and at the same time seeing for themselves "a new traditional role" in the states of the former Soviet Union. But that was sublimated, and if it existed, it was not heightened at this point. It existed certainly among certain nationalist groups and Mr. Zhirinovskiy. His party on the far right saw these as problems, but they were also exploited by the far right.

On the other hand, Ukraine was the most difficult for the Russians.

*Q: It seems to be the equivalent to a France chopped out of a...*

PICKERING: Ukraine was at least the size of a France; Kazakhstan is four times the size of France. But Ukraine was extremely important because for 300 years beginning in Czarist period Ukraine had been essentially a central part of Imperial Russia. While there was a linguistic difference and historical, national differences, there were also convergences in history. The Russian church traces its origins to the church in Ukraine and the original conversion to Orthodox Christianity in the tenth century started there. So the historical relationship is very, very strong. I used to say that everywhere I went in Russia I found Ukrainians and everywhere I went in Russia and talked to Russians there was not a Russian I met who didn't have someone in his extended family who was married to a Ukrainian. On the other hand, in the few opportunities I've had to visit Ukraine, particularly among Ukrainian speakers, there was always in the conversation at least a discussion of 300 years of Russian occupation. So the nationalisms in that sense, with what we would call the release of Ukraine from Soviet rule were still very strong. It's still important. It was clear that very large parts of the Ukrainian population particularly in the east were Russian speakers still and some of the leaders in Ukraine had very little Ukrainian. There were numbers of others that still felt very strongly about separation and this presented quite a formidable problem. For example, when you drove from Russia to Ukraine there was no natural border so to speak of. The traditional arrangements were that certain Oblasts had been under Ukraine and Kiev and certain Oblasts under Moscow control. When you got in the middle



of this flat plain down in the middle of nowhere to see kind of a temporary, non-descript border station. trucks lined up on either side crossing back and forth.

Although I can remember in another long trip I took when I drove to Central Asia, as you drove around the Fergana Valley and you looked at the map it was all divided up between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, including enclaves of territories based around the old Soviet arrangements. Almost none of those areas in 1995 had any border crossing points. Occasionally, you would find a police station somewhere near where the border was on the map, but almost no place in 1995 were we stopped and asked to show our credentials or told that we were going from one country to another and asked did we have visas and that kind of thing. In other places, sort of more formally on the main road going into Tashkent which is very close to the Kazak border, there was really a border control. On one occasion we took a back road and a police station wanted to see our passports. There were only the beginnings of the more formal arrangements to designate these places as independent states.

*Q: Were we looking upon Ukraine as, I mean, strategically thinking as an American did you see as long as the Ukraine is an independent entity Russia is not going to come back again to be the force this or that?*

PICKERING: I don't think Russia's future depended on whether it was separated from Ukraine. No, in fact those ideas exist because in later years there has been a lot of controversy and of course with the Orange revolution that has hit out at Putin...

*Q: The Orange Revolution was a pro-Ukrainian...*

PICKERING: Pro-Ukrainian National movement. Two years ago to assure that in terms of the successor to President Kuchma a Ukrainian nationalist would be elected. Interestingly enough he seems over the years to have failed to produce the kind of miracle government he had hoped he would introduce. We now have a prime minister who is very pro-Russian in Ukraine, which has made the Russians much more relaxed about where things are going. The Russians have been concerned, not only about Ukraine, but also about other areas and what they see as the creeping expansion of NATO. While Ukraine hasn't joined NATO and is unlikely I think under current circumstances to do so for sometime, if at all, Georgia has been the case where the Russians have also been concerned in the disappearance of Shevardnadze even though he was never the Russians favorite. He was blamed in Russian minds for the withdrawal of their military forces in Germany in 1991 as part of the reuniting of Germany, something they see as both a personal disaster for many of them financially -- former military people -- and as a kind of national retreat from their historic empire in the period of the Cold War.

*Q: What about Chechnya and that during the time you were there?*

PICKERING: Well it continues to be a terrible mess. I would suspect that if, as I have said on other occasions, that in many ways President Yeltsin despite his rough and ready ways and despite his interest in alcohol and despite all of his other foibles and mistakes, he seemed on most occasions to have a pretty un-erring sense as to what decision would be the right one to make to continue to promote a democratic future for Russia. A kind of democratic compass

buried in that skull of his that would point the right way. Chechnya was the one area where the compass needle wavered badly. Where, in a sense, an appeal to more primitive political instincts came about. There was no question at all that Chechnya was for Russia a growing problem. It was the one of the 22 republics of the Russian Federation, set up under Stalin as bastions so called of ethnic individuality, if I may call it that, where there was a real plurality of non-Russians. All the of the republics were dominated by Russians and the ethnic majority being honored in the creation of their republic was somewhere below 20 percent and in many cases below ten percent of the population in terms of people who spoke the ethnic language and had much of a history. But Chechnya was not. Chechnya was a place where the local nationality was in the majority and where there was a long history of separatist influence and where Islam was strong.

It was also on the border with Georgia and with Azerbaijan, so there was a problem as well in a sense that the access to Chechnya could not be completely controlled in the mountain areas especially, by being cut off by more territory belonging to the Russian Federation. The Russian military were not able to do that because of the Chechen's capabilities in terms of knowledge of their mountains and of guerrilla warfare. War erupted as a result of what the Russians considered to be too independent action on the part of the Chechen leadership of Mr. Dudayev in particular. The Russians thought, I believe, that this would be something that could be easily win. After all they looked at themselves and they were much more than pussy cats with their tremendous population, economy, military strength and so forth. They still had under a million men arms, even though it had gone radically downhill in terms of training, organization, equipment and finance. Mr. Yeltsin was convinced that a victory in Chechnya would be a great way of boosting his already declining popularity in the 1996 elections. So he got into this morass and, of course, the immediate fighting produced results that were not at all of interest to him -- they were all disastrously bad. The Russian military, as we looked at it, had sent to Chechnya twelve battalions, but each one of them from a different organization, from a different division and each one was in a sense a composite battalion made up of people drawn from existing companies but who had never worked or trained together. So both the tactics and the military performance showed this lack of training, coordination, cohesion, command and control and a clear idea of how to deal with the issue. The traditional Russian view was that if the enemy didn't surrender right away then a massive artillery bombardment would convince them to do so. This didn't seem to work. The Chechens really became even more than regular guerilla fighters and, of course, they held out for forty some years under the czar as he tried to take Chechnya in the middle, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This led Russia into a miserable position. The Russians then moved to deal with this politically -- and a number of individuals, including Mr. Berezovsky, one of the oligarchs, played a large role in convincing Russia and Chechnya that some sort of an arrangement would be useful. The Chechens never wanted to have an arrangement which was short of independence, and the Russians were never prepared to grant independence. The Russians had granted another Muslim area, Tatarstan, a significant amount of self-government within the Russian Federation -- more than any other area. Everybody thought that the Tatarstan Treaty, which came about in 1994, would be the model for the future of Chechnya. But the Chechens weren't prepared to reduce their demands sufficiently to accept that model and the Russians were not prepared to enlarge their offer. Somehow they cobbled together an approach at least that put the wallpaper over the

cracks for a while. It wasn't until Putin came in and the problem deteriorated and he once again was beguiled by the notion this would be good for elections, good for nationalism, good for him and good for everybody else that a new military effort was launched. His military once again over promised and so once again he was in a miserable mess, where good pieces of Chechnya are still dominated by guerrilla organizations and where the Russian military have kind of a modus Vivendi only.

In the meantime the war was bloody, savage, and heavily negative with respect to the local population. If there were any rules before, they were quickly forgotten and it was cruel, brutal and nasty for everybody on both sides. As a result there have been high casualties and significant losses.

*Q: Well did we have any interest in this? You as the ambassador were you doing anything on this?*

PICKERING: Sure. We had a number of interests. Our interests were first and foremost to do what we could to encourage a negotiated conclusion to this mess. The U.S. was in the early stages of mixed mind. Most of us in Russia were quite horrified by what was going on and saw it as disastrous for a new Russian democracy to be so deeply engaged in such a conflict, even though there was, even in those early days, a specter of Arab-Afghans or Afghan-Arabs fighting on the Muslim side. In addition there was the possibility of some Muslim fundamentalist influence and how that would tear into the vitals of Russia. At that point the Russian Federation had a very significant Muslim population and there were heavily Islamized areas of Russia, some along the Volga and particularly along the southern frontier. We saw Russian vulnerabilities but we saw no military solution coupled with the Russian adoration of the idea of a military solution. It seemed all as completely wrong headed and so we attempted to pass that message. We were more than a little bit undone when both Vice President Gore and then I think even Clinton skipped over it. They tried to compare the Chechen conflict to the American civil war in ways that were completely inappropriate and inept. Their agenda said we've got to get along with Mr. Yeltsin and we need to help him. I'm sure Mr. Yeltsin privately pushed them very hard to say things that would help him in dealing with the mess in Chechnya. We played in that sense happily a relatively small role in the process.

We were very supportive of the OECD mission which ended up in Grozny under very difficult conditions. For most of the period of the time I was there. It was led by a Swiss Foreign Service officer who later became ambassador in Tehran -- Tim Guldemann. He and his people did a laudable job in a situation which was close to impossible. If they weren't being beaten up by one side, they were certainly being beaten up by the other. They were distrusted by both and they did what they could to report what was happening while they lived under very dangerous conditions for a long period of time.

About that time we had a very famous American by the name of Fred Cuny who had spent good numbers of years of his life, I think he was in his late forties or fifties at the time, dealing with these impossible situations from a humanitarian point of view. Fred was, if anything, a genuine humanitarian but he was also a very wide and high stakes risk taker. Fred went to Chechnya, I saw him when he came from his first trip and he reported on what he had seen. He had seen

some pretty awful things. He had established contacts with some Chechens and traveled over to their side to talk with them. It was also clear that this was a very dangerous place to go and on his way back for another visit, we all told him we thought it was not wise to go and it was a bad time to do so. Well, Fred on that visit disappeared and in effect there has been no clear resolution of this case. This then constituted the need for a major effort on the part of the United States to find him. Fred was well thought of in many quarters and indeed was in that sense a human being of outstanding qualities in terms of what he was trying to do for people in trouble. He actually had begun not only to provide assistance to people but begun to cobble together some thoughts about how they might find a way to deal with the conflict other than through continued fighting. We have tried, had tried and continue to try to follow his traces and sought out his grave. Nobody really has been able to determine what happened.

A neighboring small republic called Ingushetia -- at one point both the Chechens and the Ingush were lumped by Stalin together and deported in the '40s as the German armies got close to that part of the Caucasus, Stalin had a fear that they would go over to the other side given the very strained relations between the Soviets Russians and the Chechens and the Ingush. They were allowed to return after the war and were later separated into two republics in the Caucasus. The Republic of Ingushetia was led by an Ingush who had been a major general in the Russian air force and with whom we were in close contact. He was able through his contacts with some of the Chechen elements to try to help on some of these occasions. We worked with him mainly through faxes; it was very difficult to get a phone call through. At one point I sent a volunteer consular officer down to Chechnya to continue to help us search for Cuny and see what was going on. He stayed there for a number of weeks at a time with great courage and worked and lived with the OECD Mission and stayed around their premises for protection. We were never able to work out precisely what happened although it was taken up directly at very high level including by the president a number of times with President Yeltsin who said he would continue to look and see if he could find out for us what happened. The general sense was that Cuny was perhaps seen as something of a foreign agent at one point. This often happens to Americans who engage themselves in these kinds of activities. As a result he may have been picked up by one of the local rogue bands, we don't know. There are various stories that he was so captured and then assassinated and buried somewhere obscure in Chechnya.

*Q: How did we see the Islamic threat within Russia and in the nearer broad?*

PICKERING: Well I think we saw...

*Q: At that time?*

PICKERING: That in Russia and near abroad most of the Muslims were pretty moderate and the form of Islam and indeed because of the Soviet pressures on them had not gone to a radicalized situation. I visited a traditional mosque in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, when I was there and we talked with the local Mufti. Generally speaking they had recovered their rights not only to use the mosque for religious observances but also to establish schools and were happy with the way the situation was going. There was no question at all that there were radical elements which moved into Chechnya and there were Chechens who were radicalized. Chechens are participating in some of the more radical movements now around the world. We were also never

sure and the Russian were never quite sure what the Turks were doing. There was, of course, a long standing Ottoman and then Turkish connection with Chechnya and the Chechens and so there were always suspicions. In any event we left that for the Russians to handle directly with the Turks. But there was evidence of some tension -- not to the point where it widely disturbed Russian-Turkish relationships. Indeed Turkish construction companies did well in Russia. The Russian white house after it was shelled and burned in October of 1993 at the time of the parliamentary revolt was repaired rapidly by one such company...

*Q: The white house was the parliamentary building?*

PICKERING: It was the parliamentary building of the Russian Federation and was repaired by a Turkish construction company in rapid time and done very well. The Turks had good economic relationships. Since then, the Russians have built a pipeline under the Black Sea to carry gas to Turkey. Russian-Turkish relations while they had their areas of tension and difficulty were also moving forward fairly well. The Turks were obviously concerned by the high volume of Russian tanker traffic taking oil out of the Black Sea and limited it at that. That led to the construction eventually beginning when I was there, of a new pipeline from the Caspian across Azerbaijan and Georgia into Turkey. The Russians didn't particularly like this, because they saw this as a way of escaping their full control over the hydrocarbon resources of the CIS. At the same time, they were not able to block it and at the same time they went ahead with their own gas pipe to Turkey.

There was also a new pipeline built from around Astrakhan in the Volga delta down to Novorossiysk, a major port in the eastern Black Sea, by Chevron and a consortium to bring out liquids, liquid petroleum from Kazakhstan in the main. It could absorb some product from Russian fields in the region and now there is an effort being made to double that. But that meant that those tankers, that product had to be loaded in tankers and shipped through the Bosphorus and the Turks were concerned about accidents in the Bosphorus particularly with large oil tankers.

*Q: This was not an economic move it was more you might say an environmental...*

PICKERING: It was a combination of environmental and safety move.

*Q: Safety move.*

PICKERING: And there were proposals made that are now being developed to move some of that oil around the Bosphorus by creating new pipelines either from Bulgaria or Turkish Thrace across into Greece or beyond into the Adriatic.

*Q: Well then on the near abroad during your time how did you view dismantlement of rockets, you know of missiles....*

PICKERING: Well there was a major effort made, a very important one by the president and the whole administration, all of us worked on it, to deal with the nuclear weapons that were left behind, deployed in Belarus, in Kazakhstan and in Ukraine. An agreement was reached and

signed in Moscow in 1994, while I was there with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to remove all of the deployed weapons, which they in fact had inherited with the break up of the Soviet Union. In the meantime, efforts were continuing to remove from places like Georgia and Kazakhstan highly enriched uranium, which was being used in research projects and otherwise under the Soviet days where they made no distinction about where they deployed HEU and that was all recovered. At the same time major efforts were being made also to arrive at new agreements to reduce the size of nuclear forces, particularly delivery vehicles, but also weapons. At the time I was there a proposal that came up in the early, earliest days of Nunn-Lugar, and probably preceded Nunn-Lugar but was one of the...

*Q: Nunn-Lugar meaning Congressional or, Senatorial act.*

PICKERING: Well it was an act of Congress but sponsored by Senators Nunn and Lugar to provide significant amounts of money in Russia and the other countries of the CIS to deal with the problems of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles left over from the Soviet days to make sure they were brought under control and dismantled or safely stored. This early proposal which preceded Nunn-Lugar but helped build toward it was to take 500 tons of highly enriched uranium out of Soviet weapons and blend that down and then use it in U.S. and other nuclear reactors as fuel for which we paid the Russians the prevailing price. The interest in their part was to gain the income. The interest in our part was to take out of circulation a lot of weapons useable material. It's worked pretty well and the program still goes on (Ending 2015). We are reaching near the end of it and people are talking about whether there should not be a repeat if there IS A sufficient amount of weapons useable material left. That was possible to do with uranium because uranium is a viable reactor fuel but much harder and more problematic to do with plutonium.

With plutonium, we helped to build very large facilities to centralize storage of Russian military plutonium and the Russians, it took the time for them to accept the idea, but they understood the value of having their fingers on this stuff and not having it out deployed in small outstations.

*Q: What about sort of the intellectual residue of nuclear, well the nuclear talent that was in the Soviet Union?*

PICKERING: It remained there and it was the subject of real concern because of perforation potential that all these bright people who had done advance work on nuclear weapons being available. It was certainty clear to us that the Iranians made major attempts to try to get hold of these people and bring them to Iran or have them, if they couldn't come to Iran, work for Iran in Russia. We had quite a bit of trouble because the ministry of atomic energy in Russia is a kind of state within a state with all of its abilities to exercise security functions.

*Q: They had cities...*

PICKERING: They had cities and plants and integrated efforts all over the country. They also as a result operated with some independence of the normal bureaucracy. I spent time with Mr. Mikhailov, the minister, doing what I could to persuade him that some of their practices in some of these areas needed more tight control. But we all reckoned they had several million people employed in this system including their families and they were all over Russia. We kept getting

intelligence information that the Iranians were reaching out and in some cases finding positive responses from some of these people. This was deeply concerning because we wanted to do nothing at all to contribute to future Iranian capability in the nuclear area.

*Q: Were we doing anything to bring the talent to the United States or to subsidize the talent that was there?*

PICKERING: Well, we had developed something called the ISTC, the International Science and Technology Center, part of funding the funding for which came from the United States and some from the European Union. The role of the ISTC was to encourage Russian scientists in these areas to come forward with civilian projects where the ISTC would provide seed money to help them get going with the idea that they could move these projects toward a commercial outcome and away from their military scientific work. That was working ahead and it made certain sense. We encouraged the Russians to refuse to allow these people to go abroad and to find ways to continue to employ them. The atomic energy system in Russia in effect employed a lot of these people. We're not sure what they all did, and it may have been that we pretend to work, they pretend to pay us system, but it was nevertheless there. Obviously some slipped through; we were most concerned by both the DPRK (North Korea) and Iran, as potential places where they could be engaged.

*Q: Byelorussia, is it Belarus or Byelorussia?*

PICKERING: One is the English pronunciation and the other is Russian.

*Q: OK, well anyway, that country has been rule...what is the general's name?*

PICKERING: Lukashenko.

*Q: He's been there for...I mean he is sort of a Stalinistic figure.*

PICKERING: He is.

*Q: The country and did he present us with a challenge or concern?*

PICKERING: Well he did in the sense that he was not happy about our folks in Minsk. We had an embassy there. we were happy to leave it to the folks in Minsk to deal with him. He and Yeltsin didn't have particularly good relations; he's had just slightly better relations with Putin. As you know, there is a kind of confederation now, a loose one between Belarus and Russia and Lukashenko still runs the show but Lukashenko is consistently doing things the Russians don't like but not to the point where it's forced them to break up the relationship. The relationship they have may be now more protocolary and formal than it is practical, in a sense that part of what used to be the Soviet empire is very much like the rest of western Russia. Trade and issues of that sort are not necessarily optimized or highly sought after, but the Russians can go back and forth to Belarus now. People now have families there, the dialect is a little bit different people tell me and obviously there is a little more Stalinist rule, Stalinist type rule in Belorussia. The U.S. has had its problems with that, our embassy was kind of closed off and things of that sort as

he continued to use those ways of protesting our statements and unhappiness about the way in which he was operating his satrapy there.

*Q: What about the enclave of...I'm going to use the term I can remember Konigsberg sort of a peculiar quasi-naval base or whatever it is...*

PICKERING: Well Kaliningrad is the Russian name and I visited there while I was in Russia, we flew in. It shows still some remnants of being German, East Prussian, not much but some in the housing, buildings and apartments, still badly destroyed in the center of the city. It's really an exclave from the Soviet or Russian point of view in the sense that you have to go across parts of Belorussia and Lithuania by rail to get in. The question of access by sea, of course, is uninterrupted but on land access, the Russians have leaned heavily on the Lithuanians to make sure that the railway and roads stay open and they reached an accommodation after a while to make that happen. The Russians have seen this as sort of an outpost next to the EU. It has been engaged in trading activities and otherwise to try to take advantage of its special status. It in effect is probably closer in its customs freedoms and in distance to Western Europe, than it is to Russia. People have also taken advantage of it to become a kind of base for criminal activity. As a naval base, I was never impressed.

*Q: Well then moving on to Putin. Let's stick to the time you were there. Did Putin cross your radar at all?*

PICKERING: Yes sure, we may have talked about this before. Putin was deputy mayor of St. Petersburg to Anatoly Sobchak when I would go to St. Petersburg maybe three, four, five times a year. I would always try to call on Mayor Sobchak. If Sobchak wasn't there and he wasn't there on at least a couple occasions, Putin would sit in for him. So I would go up and we would have a chat in one of the mayor's conference rooms. Putin was in those days, I think, very circumspect, very quiet, not very forthcoming with what he had to say. I suppose what one could have said you know kind of typical intelligence agent to talk to a foreign ambassador -- he answered questions -- I suspect not as fully as we would have liked. We all saw him as basically a kind of former KGB guy from a European posting who had come back and done reasonably well. His approach to things was in those days was that he aligned with a liberal constitutionalist, Anatoly Sobchak, who was at heart a Jeffersonian and as a result was "part of the reform movement". There were others in the consulate who had suspected that, in fact, he was also the source of major harassment of the consulate. We were never able I think, quite clearly to pin it on Putin, although he seemed to be the highest-ranking guy from the old bad days still around. So more fingers were pointed toward him than I think probably evidence justified at the time, although there were people in the consulate who swore he was, in fact, the root cause of all of their difficulties and even in those days felt that he was "a bad actor." My conversations with him didn't give me any feeling one way or other, he didn't say much.

*Q: He didn't seem like a rising star or anything?*

PICKERING: No, he didn't seem like a rising star in that sense, although people said that he was capable. People in the western business community said that he was not a problem for them, that he helped them on occasion, and that he had not made noises about being paid off or anything of



that sort, which sometimes was the major interest of people at Putin's level on the bureaucracy in those days.

*Q: Maybe one last question on the Russian side and then we'll end this session. What about Yugoslavia? What was happening in Yugoslavia of concern to you?*

PICKERING: Well I mean there were many things of concern. Part of the time Dick Holbrooke was attempting to negotiate something that ended up at Dayton for Bosnia. Part of the time the Russians would turn off energy supplies to the region for their own interests, often not necessarily congruent with ours. We would have to ask them to turn it back on and they would say, "Well nobody pays us that's the reason why we've turned them off." Sometimes, that may have been the reason why they turned it off and then we would have to figure out how they could help get paid out of places that had no money.

*Q: Because we were putting clamps on the area, particularly Serbia.*

PICKERING: We were putting clamps on Serbia which the Russians tended to see as very much their close clients and people who they respected because of their common Slavic origins, their adherence to Eastern Orthodoxy, and common interest in the region. They wanted in many ways to be lawyers for the Serbs and wanted us to be lawyers for everybody else, but not for the Serbs. They tended to try to exploit Serbian differences and nationalism and to uphold Milosevic, whatever he was doing, rather than the other way around. Obviously they didn't particularly like our bombing campaign when it came time for that -- when we felt we had to do that in order to bring the Serbs along.

*Q: Were you getting much in the way of either instruction or information from the State Department on the state of events in Yugoslavia at the time?*

PICKERING: They shared cables widely; we got a lot of information. From time-to-time I got instructions to go and talk to the Russians about what we would like to have them support or do, or how we wanted them to operate in the region. We had a difference of views; they were not nearly as clear-cut as nor felt as strongly as they later became.

*Q: Was your staff, particularly thinking about the junior officers, were they looking at Yugoslavia and rested on how we were dealing with this which was essentially for a long time hands off attitude with some pretty awful things were happening?*

PICKERING: Yes, that happened more in the period before I got there. At the time I got there, we were a little less hands off and became more hands on as time went on. We had people with the right background and experience in Yugoslavia. They had reservations. Some of them were mid-grade and more senior officers who actually had served there. I think less among the junior officers.

*Q: But this was not a particularly divisive issue, which it was in parts of the State Department.*

PICKERING: No, I don't think it was from our perspective.

*Q: OK, Tom...*

PICKERING: We saw the Russian role and the Russian interest and where they wanted to go not necessarily congruent with ours, but it had come not to be in sharp conflict as it is now, as black and white as it is.

*Q: Well did you feel that Yugoslavia gave, I'm speaking about the time you were there, gave the Russians a chance to kind of show that they were a world power and all?*

PICKERING: Well it was obviously seen by them and by us as an opportunity where they could play a spoiler role and maybe exert their independence a little more than they had. The relationship between Yeltsin and us was such that we were able to pull them off some of that and they were not as obstreperous as they later became from our perspective in Kosovo.

*Q: Well then you left Russia when?*

PICKERING: November 1996.

*Q: How would you describe the relation's between the United States and Russia at the time you left?*

PICKERING: At the time I left I thought that in a lot of areas we were getting along fairly well. We had some differences but we had ways and methods of operating together to try to patch those up and bring things together. That Yeltsin and Clinton were really the keys to a lot of this and that Yeltsin had gone through a period of serious decline was a problem. He had his heart operation, I think, shortly before I left. Dr. DeBakey came over and helped put him back together again. He advised the Russian surgeon who did the operation. But it was not certain as to whether he would reemerge as a serious leader. There were significant uncertainties about future leadership in Russia at that time which were not resolved until he in effect picked out Mr. Putin to take his place a few years afterward.

Our concern was obviously that Russia was still heavily assailed by problems of corruption, inefficiency, real difficulty in taking this huge behemoth of a country and turn it around. There were varying views about reform and what had to be done, but everybody thought little had been done -- not very much and the Russians were struggling to deal with that. They were paying a fairly heavy price economically and in personal terms for the shift away from communism, but most people didn't understand it. It had begun long before communism failed and they were basically reaping the benefits in, if can put it this way, "of the failures that communism had set into place" which really only struck home at the time that Gorbachev left and Yeltsin took over.

There have been long arguments and some differences outside and inside Russia over the failure of communism. My view is that it came from inside. It was heavily influenced by economic failure. The system was very inefficient and corruption played a role. Russia over the years broke an iron law of economics -- it tried to spend more than it could take in through any of its sources of income. Some of that was in the military area. They did try to copy what they saw in our

aerospace journals about what we were building. I remember visiting their air force airplane museum at an airfield east of Moscow. They were all out in the open. There were huge helicopters, one of a kind fighters, bomber and many other aircraft. They were good at airplane design and aerodynamics. They had real trouble with engines. We saw Tupolev's first copy of a US B-29 produced on the orders of Stalin in one year by intensive reverse engineering. Their space program was generally very good. We learned things from that and lean on it still today to get to the space station.

The lesson in all of that was they had guns, they wanted butter. Guns and butter strained the system and was generally too much for them and the decline was clear to Gorbachev, he saw it coming. I remember speaking with him not about this but about what he wanted to do. He wanted to reform communism, make it more effective. He was a true believer in the system. But he was grandly out of date and didn't know much about markets or how capitalism tried to harmonize the economy by depending on markets. He wanted to build more machine tools and things like that. Almost no contact with or interest in the knowledge economy.

So the Soviet Union went down. It became a political game in the United States to claim credit. We may have induced them to spend more in a hurry than they were capable of affording, but it was their own decisions that led to overstretch and then collapse.

*Q: OK, so this is a good place to stop.*

PICKERING: Yes, I think it's OK. You have some more questions left over from last time we should probably keep them alive.

*Q: OK, can you think of any that we...I think I've covered the ones...*

PICKERING: Have you pretty much now.

*Q: Yeah. I mean we'll always have a chance once you go over the manuscript since it is such a huge subject. But then in '96 what happened?*

PICKERING: In '96, I knew that I would be coming back and I expressed my intention to retire which I did. I went to work in December '96, came back in November, retired the end of November and went to work for the Eurasia Foundation which was a small foundation largely funded by AID money, particularly at that time, to provide small grants and loans to the states of the former Soviet Union. It was part of our effort to try to encourage and develop entrepreneurship and press freedom and things of that sort in that area.

*Q: OK, today is the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2007 and Tom we are now talking about your golden years when you retired from the Department of State and you may have spent a little time with the Eurasia Foundation but mainly I suppose our interview will be mainly concerned with fishing and locking and contemplation. OK, enough of the nonsense.*

*Tom, tell me about how long were you with the Eurasia Foundation and tell me about your impression of working for an NGO (non-governmental organization) and all.*

PICKERING: Let me say a couple things. One, I need to correct the statement that you just played. The Eurasia Foundation doesn't give small grants and loans to the states; it gives them in the states of the former Soviet Union to private individuals and institutions.

*Q: This is part of the thing that we'd learned long and hard that particularly NGOs you just don't give governments that have strong streaks of corruption, you...*

PICKERING: I think that it was more the fact that the thesis of the Eurasia Foundation which grew out of a lot of discussions at the time the Soviet Union collapsed. We wanted it to go directly to people. So the governments, regardless of their honesty or dishonesty, regardless of their management or mismanagement, were not seen as the viable targets for this. This was basically to get what we would call ground up, popular activities going which built a sense of responsibility and democracy, built a sense of reasonable press, helped people encourage and develop viable business opportunities at a level that would be roughly between five and 20 thousand dollars. With very rare exceptions we did a few large programs which in themselves were funded to take on support say for a serious newspaper or two. We might fund the whole program and they would redistribute the funds among newspapers in places like Kazakhstan or Russia that were opening up new opportunities for writers, new opportunities for people who believed in press freedom and new opportunities for them to create a truthful press and a press that was alert to and interested in producing kind of a best in their area of journalism. We brought people to the United States in order to do that.

So that was essentially the central thesis. It grew out of a kind of new view of how to do things -- to set up an independent foundation, to seek funding not just from the U.S. government, but from elsewhere and also to see if we could do this successfully through providing individuals on site who were knowledgeable in the language, in the history and culture of the area and ready work out of small, spartan offices. We began to create the information that was necessary to make the right selections and run these programs effectively. When I was there we had an office in Moscow, we had one in Samara and one in Vladivostok. We had beginnings of offices in Ukraine, even in Belarus. In the Caucasus we had a strong program in Armenia because the American Armenian community also helped to match funding and the Congress was persuaded by the American Armenian community to be generous there. We had a program in Georgia; we were beginning one in Azerbaijan although even in those days Azerbaijan as a result of Armenian pressure was limited in the role the US government could play. We had Central Asian offices; we had at least one regional office in Almaty in Central Asia again to pick up on in those areas.

*Q: Quite a wide spread. What was the history?*

PICKERING: Well the history of the organization was as best I can remember that two or three years before that, the Clinton administration was looking at new ways of doing business and new ways of carrying out aid. Some of these ideas, it was a small foundation standing alone with its own staff, unimpacted by a whole series of operating restrictions put on by government and agile and strong in its ability to evaluate, something like that could do a whole lot of new things at grass roots level that the AID program was just not capable of managing, and could do it

efficiently. The Eurasia Foundation has proved that time and time again, it's still in business, and it's still going on. I spent a total of, I think, from the beginning of December to the beginning of April -- so four months there. It was something in which I was only beginning to get started. Initially, they had a couple of people there including the vice president, Rocky Staples (former USIA), who had been there a long while. They were enormously helpful in giving me a sense of what the history of the foundation was, what its operating mode was and what its culture was and that was extremely important. The office was small, the people who were running different segments of the operation were all highly knowledgeable, and they were all easy to approach. So it was a very small and interesting group. I began to do an extensive amount of work on email for the first time; it was a good way to stay in touch. So that was my initial kind of sheep dip into email work.

I traveled a bit and spent some time thinking about other countries that might be helpful in funding. We went to Oslo and Stockholm as I recall. Both of them listened and neither was ready to jump but over time they were helpful. I went to Brussels to speak to the EU. That was a harder nut to crack and overtime my successors at Eurasia did a good job in developing funding from those sources.

They had asked me to give them a commitment that I wouldn't leave for a high-level government job. I said I would. I didn't think any high-level government job would come my way. But in an unexpected way it did. Madeleine Albright had been asked to become secretary of state. I attended a meeting or two at the State Department at her request fairly early on to talk about what was going on in various parts of the world, a kind of overall meeting. She asked me if I could come by, maybe even before this, to see her at home and talk about the State Department, which I did. Quite unexpectedly for me, she asked if I would take on the under secretary for political affairs job. I told her that I was extremely interested. I'd had a commitment to the foundation, which I had to square. I had obviously also to square that with my family who were expecting me to stay retired. In the event, after a lot of discussion both in the family and with the foundation they agreed with reluctance that I should take this job. So I told Madeleine that I had to have my prostrate removed before I could really begin, that was coming along and that was done in early May. In the meantime, I went over and started my transition in early April and then took the weeks out that I needed to recover and got confirmed and came upstairs and started working with her at the end of May as under secretary.

*Q: This is May 1997?*

PICKERING: 1997.

Q: You were under secretary for political affairs.

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: What would you say your impression, I mean you'd been serving the Clinton administration as first term what was your impression of the Clinton administration sort of now in its maturity with a new secretary of state but with a not benevolent and perhaps even hostile Congress which*

*intruded very much on foreign affairs particularly the leadership of Jesse Helms. How did you see the sort of mega for international political situation and the United States' role in this?*

PICKERING: Well it was clear that President Clinton and his administration offered enormous advantages. First, he personally was extremely interested in foreign affairs. He was an extremely quick study; he had a mind that asked all of the right questions, many of them extremely deep questions about our relationships. He clearly wanted to be on top of the issues and he was in all occasions where I'd seen him in action. He was an enormously capable individual in dealing with foreign leaders and foreign leaders accorded him a great deal of respect and indeed he was highly capable of persuading them. Of course, I had seen his relationship with Yeltsin develop over the years since 1993, so he brought all of that to the table. He had in Sandy Berger an extremely strong national security adviser and Jim Steinberg was his deputy; it was an extremely strong team.

*Q: You are talking about Sandy Berger he did not come from an international...*

PICKERING: Sandy as I recall, had a legal background but also then extremely capable in trade and trade law issues so he had a good bit of background. He had been Tony Lake's deputy all through the first part of the administration so he was intimately familiar with the issues and the president's outlook. Jim Steinberg had been with Tom Donilon, perhaps the two closest personal advisors of Warren Christopher in the State Department. So that provided what I would call a knowledgeable and extremely adept and capable group at the National Security Council staff.

If I had any concern it was expressed even before I got settled into the job when I went over and talked to Sandy. I said, "It seems to me from the observations that I had of the operation of the national security council in the first administration, that the danger was that it tended to focus too much attention and too much decision-making too close to the top of the system and not enjoy enough of the benefits and enough of the contributions that could be made further down. As you know, the national security system while different presidents accord different names for the pieces of the structure and the mode of operation, it tends to have a meeting at the top, often with the president and the cabinet members of the security council, the secretary of state and defense, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, often the secretary of the treasury, the director of the CIA and sometimes the attorney general. They get asked for and give advice and often suggest or endorse policy approaches for the president

Then there is a deputies committee, which is often the deputy to these individuals. But in State it often came, at least in my time, to the under secretary in part because while Strobe Talbot was deputy, Strobe was spending, as he was with me in Russia, a great deal of his time on the Russia account. Strobe picked up a good bit of the India account, particularly the nuclear side of the India account and was interested in other issues. So a lot of the other meetings that tended to focus on political questions in other regions, because that was the job of the under secretary for political affairs it went to me to attend.

But to get back to my point with Sandy, there was less active effort in sub committees devoted to regional and functional questions led either by the assistant secretary of state or the appropriate senior director in the NSC or both. They should have been there to winnow through issues, make

policy decisions or to raise issues up to the deputies committee. It meant the deputies committee would be the court of first instance for a lot of questions. Sandy and Jim liked it that way because that meant that they were immediately involved in the equations and could keep a tight rein on where the government went. It was more effective for them in a control function on policy and policy related issues. But, it was less effective in terms of adequate preparation and good advice. It meant that we were rushed in going to meetings, that we were constantly in meetings and not developing with our staffs our own briefs. We had less time to draw on the knowledge and wisdom of the next level down, which was really the set of work horses in the State Department. So that was a disadvantage and I saw it coming in, I saw it going out.

*Q: I was talking to someone, I can't remember his name right now, but I was talking about Clinton more the early years and said, "The problem with Clinton is he's very bright but also his organizational..."*

*Q: This is Tape 21, Side 1, with Tom Pickering. I was saying so there was a sort of a fraternity type style in the White House one time of people getting to the presidents ear so who ever got to him last would sort of steer the direction. But you've reached him when he was at a more mature level.*

PICKERING: I also reached a Security Council that was more mature. I did not deal extensively with the Security Council under Tony Lake so it's hard for me to comment first hand and I won't. But it was clear that if there were disadvantages in terms of the control and where things were going, Sandy made sure in fact that it was a more orderly process. I can remember the president coming into Security Council meetings where I was present with Madeleine Albright, but he would insist on going around the room and asking everybody, including I was in that case a back bencher, for their views on key issues. This was particularly true, for example, with respect to the attack on the camps in Afghanistan following the bombings of our embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. He wanted to know what everybody in the room thought about the issue. There was no question at all both from anecdotal information and some published information that he spent a lot of time mulling over decisions. Decisions on the use of force shouldn't come easy; many of them were very tough, many of them had multiple facets. He was at the one place at the top where he had to integrate what his feelings would be about the political repercussions domestically on any decision that he was taking with foreign policy importance. I thought that had a lot of persuasive capacity because he was preeminently a domestic political person, he had grown up in it and he'd spent a lot of his life in it. He knew and understood U.S. domestic politics extremely well and he knew and understood how some of these foreign policy issues could in many ways raise serious problems for him and his administration at home.

*Q: Well now was there the feeling with this second term of the Clinton administration Warren Christopher had left and in the department at that time Warren Christopher sort of left the impression of a fine legal mind but one gets the impression that he was the president's legal advisor in foreign affairs and didn't leave, well I gather, much imprint on a real sort of vision thing as far as whither the United States and the foreign world. Madeleine Albright came out of a completely different background. Was there a feeling that this might be different?*

PICKERING: Oh I think that's fair. I worked closely with Warren Christopher only on Russia. In those items he understood the brief when he had to deliver a message to them, and he did it very well. He was very capable and proficient at that kind of thing, wanted to know what policy thinking was, but didn't himself share with me of his own policy thinking or vision for things. Strobe was very much in charge in many ways and Strobe's own close and personal relationship with the president obviously didn't make it easy for Warren Christopher in terms of where they went. But Strobe is such a wonderful, decent person and such a great human being that I'm sure as he did with Madeleine, he kept Chris informed about what he was doing and where he was going. Strobe would seek advice and made sure that the circle was squared, so to speak, when it came to the Secretary. Even though he was also in the habit of dealing personally with the president and often with Sandy at the National Security Council, and I'm sure that's not a comfortable and easy relationship for either a secretary or deputy secretary, but overall the two of them worked hard, Madeleine and Strobe to make that work even when each of them had their own views.

Madeleine came with very strong views on foreign policy. She articulated a lot of those very well in her own speeches. She came in like a lot of Secretaries of State with some concern about the Foreign Service and how I was going to receive her and whether it would be a threat or work well for her. I told her -- I constantly said to her I that was unnecessary, I believed Foreign Service was prepared to accept leadership, that it wanted it and would be looking for it. She was the first female Secretary and as a result probably had more heaped on her shoulders than was ever comfortable, but I never saw that get in the way in any fashion. There were examples where Foreign Service officers did things she didn't like and she tended to see that as betrayal. I think that was over reaction perhaps on some of those particular cases and some of them it wasn't. Some of the steps may have been more deliberate and as a result an effort to try to move policy by themselves as opposed to doing it in the system.

*Q: How did Secretary of State Albright use you?*

PICKERING: Essentially, I told her when I came that I thought that my role would be to make sure that the department was on top of and covered all of the issues that were coming up that were basically political. I had talked to Stu Eizenstat ahead of time, Stu and I had worked together in the past not the...

*Q: Stu Eizenstat was what?*

PICKERING: Stu had become economic under secretary and we both agreed on this kind of philosophy -- open meetings, consultation, each of us working in a clear field and immediate efforts to close any problems or issues by speaking directly to each other. Stu had been President Carter's White House Chief of Staff. I also told her that I thought that I would be delighted to do the things that were not being covered and I would try to stay in touch with issues that she and Strobe were working on so I knew generally where they were in places on issues like India or Russia. Where I had advice to offer I would offer it. They were comfortable with proceeding that way. Obviously there was a huge amount to do. My own feeling was and I told her this and I told the assistant secretary's this that my feeling was that the assistant secretaries of the regional bureaus with whom I was most closely associated had to have a personal relationship with her.



They should work for her. I would do everything I could to promote that. Under the organization chart and in reality they reported directly to her, not through me. I understood this and I expected they would keep me informed and that they would use me and that I would be available to them for all relevant issues that she could not address or that Strobe could not address. Where I felt I could make a decision I would do so. I would not surprise her in that regard, but that I thought that it was important that we do a couple of other things.

One, to have the assistant secretary's directly reporting to the secretary, so I insisted whenever she had a meeting on a policy issue that if it were a question of an assistant secretary being there and it always was, that the assistant secretary would be there and in fact had to do the initial setting out of the issue for the Secretary in the meeting. If I had a comment, it would come later, that it would not be my policy suggestions but theirs because I felt that they carried the ball, they had to have that relationship. They needed to speak with confidence when they were out and about that they had a relationship with the secretary and could obviously be seen and known to be able to talk to the secretary. I think this worked very well. On a whole range of issues that she couldn't deal with, I would have the assistant secretary's in and we would discuss the issue and if a decision had to be made and I felt I could make it would be made.

I had a very clear sense with Stu that whenever there were issues that involved economics and that my people...the political side was involved, they should go to his meetings. We would 'destovepipe' the State Department a little bit on that score. That would be true with respect to the other under secretary's. I would operate the same way. I felt that if I were making a decision, I had to have at least one meeting for important decisions where all the relevant players were in the room, regional, functional, lawyers, intelligence and so. Rarely if ever with Stu or anyone else did we have a serious problem about whose issue was whose. In arms control, in disarmament that went clearly to the under secretary for that area.

There were some new under secretary's; we had a new under secretary part way through who dealt with public diplomacy, but whose work in public diplomacy was clearly defined. We had a global affairs under secretary and that work was pretty clearly defined. I felt it was important that every week, once a week, I have the assistant secretary's from the regional bureaus in for an hour collectively. We would often talk about issues having to do with the Department -- beyond their own bureaus. I would usually set the stage. Sometimes it was just a quick catch-up on what they were dealing with, but other times it was the future of the Department or Foreign Service type issues, or our style, or our relations with a particular government agency or department. We used that as an opportunity to have useful collective discussions about where things were going and most importantly where they should be going.

What else can I say? I think that...I felt that the department had been too dangerously stove piped...

*Q: You might explain what stove piped is.*

PICKERING: It meant that in effect the under secretaries were supervising sectors of the department that were represented by bureaus. The bureaus were too closely tied to the under secretary, that everything had to go through that under secretary, that in effect it meant that the

under secretary would hold meetings only with the people who were “reporting through him directly” and as a result the full breath of the Department’s interest in a particular issue could not get considered very easily for bureaucratic reasons at the under secretary level. Therefore the under secretaries were not making decisions or not making decisions fully informed by the considerations across the department. As a result they were not well enough informed about how the other pieces of the department felt. So it was generally my pattern, I know it was Stu’s and others and I encouraged this with others, that whenever you had an issue that involved the regional bureaus and their leadership by all means have them in as part of the meeting. I did too so if I had issues that had economic consequences and almost everyone did, or had legal issues or whatever we would try to have a meeting of all the players rather than to have a meeting of the stove piped regional group only that had only a piece of the issue. The purpose was to try to make sure in fact that the decisions were made sensibly and in view of all the questions.

*Q: How did you find that the representatives of the other bureaus got on with each other?*

PICKERING: They had differences of view, that was obvious, but I mean they felt free to express them, I listened, I wanted to hear what they had to say. I always learned something new. I found over the years that you don’t really understand the problem until you’ve heard both sides from the proponents. Some of the worst decisions you make are when you listen to one side of views of an issue and make a decision on that basis without hearing what the other side has to say. You are always surprised that there is some good reason why people have a different view on the other side. You have to absorb that. It may be at the end that the weight you give that particular position is less than the weight you give other pieces of the position, but that’s your decision and at least you’ve heard it the other side.

*Q: Well did you find...we are still talking about sort of organization before we move to the issue. One of the things I’ve heard and I’m getting this all second hand but that Madeleine Albright had a sort of coterie as many secretaries of state have and it was not overly responsive to the department. It sort of walled her off from various people.*

PICKERING: There is no question at all that Madeleine brought a group in of people that she worked with in the past and with whom she felt comfortable. Her chief of staff was in that group, several individuals who had worked with her in New York but had become integrated into the Department were also people that she looked to for thinking and advice. She had her spokesman, Jamie Rubin, with whom she had an obviously had a very close relationship with in New York. She received advice from those individuals, relied upon them because she trusted them and knew who they were. But I had never felt that she was at all closed off. After all she chose the assistant secretaries of state and the regional assistant secretaries had broad access to her. She wanted to be in touch and the major policy decisions and the major discussions certainly that I was engaged in took place with the regional assistant secretary’s front and center and carrying the ball. They become very quickly her people and had the experience, knowledge, the staffs and the embassies to be able to give her good and considered advice. Like all secretaries of state, there were some people she didn’t like and some people she liked. Obviously the people she didn’t like she either changed or put up with one way or the other. But that is a human quality and not necessarily something that’s unique.

To some extent however the people around her were seen by the rest of the State Department that they were not intimately involved with on a regular basis with her, as outsiders and people with whom they had not grown up. So there were really feelings of some tension -- no doubt about it. I always felt that I had full access to the people around her and that the people around her were always useful for me in getting a view as to what she was hearing from them and often as to issues that she had on her mind. But, almost every morning, I spent time with Madeleine alone in her office before the day began. If there was any issue that came up, and often she would give me a ring when I got in which was often before she did, and she would call me and say what's going on, come up, have you seen this thing, and you know and we'd talk about it. I would give her some reactions and thoughts but these would all then become part of where the process was going during the day.

*Q: Well in one of my interviews, I interviewed Phyllis Oakley who was the head of INR, and she said something that I found very disturbing and that was that she used to brief Madeleine Albright as the head of the State Department's intelligence and...*

PICKERING: INR intelligence and research.

*Q: Research bureau and at one point she was told it wasn't necessary for her to do it that secretary was being briefed by the CIA and that would take care of it. Now I don't know if this was a personality thing or not...*

PICKERING: I think it was more of a personality thing.

*Q: Because INR has, frankly, a much better reputation than the CIA for...*

PICKERING: They often did, yes, they often were right...

*Q: But did you catch sort of this type of thing occasionally?*

PICKERING: Occasionally, but this was more personality issue than I think it was substantive issue.

*Q: Well let's talk a bit first...*

PICKERING: She saw the secretary's summary which Colin Powell has now cut out which I think was a mistake because I thought the secretary's summary was a uniquely diplomatic look on the basis of INR's experience at a whole series of issues that we're not well covered by the agency. I had an agency briefer come in to see me in the morning -- not the same person that Madeleine had -- and covered I am sure much of the same information. So I knew what was on their minds and where they were going. I read the secretary's summary every day and if I had questions I went to INR and INR was very responsive and supported me on questions and issues. They often set up when we were in a difficult negotiation where the intelligence community could be very supportive INR would be at the center setting up real time intelligence support for us.

*Q: What were some of the issues that maybe start with sort of on a worldwide basis let's look at Latin America first.*

PICKERING: I think that the big one for me at the time, that took more time, was Colombia. Jim Dobbins for a while was at the NSC working on Colombia. Jim and I talked frequently. Jim had asked me to get a little more involved, but I kind of demurred because I'd got enough involved in other things. But later on in 1998, Sandy called and he said that they thought with some justification, that Colombia was headed in a very bad direction. There was now a new President down there -- Andres Pastrana, and we saw some opportunities that weren't open before. We needed to find a way to pick it up and would we form a kind of executive committee for Colombia and would I run it? I said, "Sandy if you think it's necessary and you ask, I will." He had already talked to Madeleine and gotten her OK. So Pete Romero who was the assistant secretary and Rand Beers who was running the narcotics and crime bureau at the time became with me the centerpiece of that -- I relied very heavily on them to help with thoughts and ideas.

One of the early thoughts that they came up with was that we needed to go down to Colombia and talk to Pastrana who was a relatively new president. Indeed Pastrana's election put a new man in charge down there who would be more likely to work with us and face some of the most difficult issues -- the ones that were most sensitive in Colombian domestic politics

We needed to work with Pastrana on the basis that now was a good time to take many of the ideas and thoughts that they had developed over the last few years and some that we had and combine these into a national plan. They had no national plan. The national plan had to cover diverse areas, not just what the military was doing, but a whole set of areas having to do with human rights, employment, judiciary reform and a lot of other questions that rarely if ever, got considered. At the same time this interagency process should be made to work. We should take an interagency group down first and talk to Pastrana. We did that; we had good conversations with Pastrana and his cabinet. He agreed that he would put together this plan. We worked out a method for doing that -- how the interaction would work and then that became the centerpiece for a fair amount of activity. We were enormously aided by a very able Colombian ambassador here in Washington, Luis Alberto Moreno, who is now head of the Inter-American Development Bank. Pastrana's response was very helpful when we went to Colombia and happily were able to do things in Spanish, so the group worked with the Colombians in their environment in Spanish. Pastrana appointed some good people to help us, to be coordinators of the plan. We spent a lot of time with the Colombian police and military working with them, understanding their parts of it and to encourage them to be strong players. The executive committee came together pretty well.

Essentially, what we had was a situation in which American agencies had all been doing little bits and pieces of work, but had not sat together as often as they should have. So I had regular meetings. The people who came understood that this was an opportunity to get things done. We made it very clear that as we worked with Pastrana, we would attempt to develop some significant US additional funding, particularly if the Colombians would fund a big piece (2/3rds) of this total effort. So we put all that together and in the space of about six months we had an unusually strong program heavily into helicopters and other military equipment which they very badly needed. They had only a few helicopters, it was obvious in a country that size with the

mission as difficult as it is to deal with narco-traffickers who were as well political insurgents, both the police and the military needed helicopters to support their work.

This proposal was then in a sense taken next to OMB (Office of Management and Budget) where we had a lot of discussion. It wasn't automatically accepted even though, in fact, NSC was supporting us. With that kind of support and with the way in which we had put the program together, and with the support of the agencies, we got a \$1.3 billion program agreed to by the OMB and that was taken to the Hill as a supplemental. On the Hill, Ambassador Moreno was extraordinarily useful and great at bringing the members along. He had good contacts and he worked very hard. We had almost a daily telephone call managing that piece of the activity. In the meantime Romero and Rand Beers were fountains of ideas of new thoughts.

Two things contributed immediately to the success of the Executive Committee we set up -- the fact that people had been working hard individually for years in some cases now we had a coordinated effort in which they could see progress and secondly the fact that we went for a supplemental for the budget rather than trying to take it out of the existing budgets of the key agencies where that is always rough, almost impossible going if you want to do that.

Over time, we expanded the process. Once we got under way, and even as funding was still being sought in Washington, we went to Colombia first on a monthly basis and later less often. The purpose was to have a meeting of our interagency group with their cabinet. Pastrana came and sat opposite us running his Colombian team. I chaired on the other side. We had a simple agenda, what was working what was not? What did they want from us, what did we want from them? The meetings were held in Spanish and we often went to Cartagena on the Atlantic coast, a beautiful city, relatively secure and a place where the Colombians could relax a bit.

A fundamental principle of the plan was to be sure that all aspects of the plan were funded adequately and pursued in common. That meant judicial reform should have its role just as police and military operations did. We accepted that one aspect of the military would be two fully vetted and US trained battalions to work in the drug growing areas. We wanted to avoid the notion that insurgency, not stopping the drug trafficking, was our primary objective. We continued spraying from the air as well as using ground based destruction of the coca crop.

Smaller side meetings with Pastrana dealt with some of the more sensitive issues like the negotiations with the guerilla groups. In that arena, Bernie Aronson, former Assistant Secretary in the Bush 41 administration, joined me along with a former NY Times correspondent who was following the negotiations from the UN side. Pastrana was more limited in dealing with negotiations because Colombian domestic politics was yet not ready for that kind of move.

The rest of the team I thought played very cooperatively and it was very interesting the way you deal with other agencies in the process. It was little bit ad hoc but it helped that we used one of the department leaders for heading it up and brought the question together and made it go. Of course since then this centerpiece of our activity with Colombia continued. I know that Marc Grossman, my successor, and now Nick Burns his successor, continue to spend a time and effort in pushing this question ahead.

*Q: Say with OMB did you feel that you were dealing with a relatively hostile foreign government practically?*

PICKERING: We were dealing with people at OMB who had very salient and significant questions. They didn't come to the meeting saying we totally agree with you and we may want to argue about the money a little bit. We want you to justify all of this so why don't you just tell us why it is important. We want you to give us a sense as to where it fits in the administration's programs and why are we doing this -- and here are all the dangers we see. Indeed we were all conscious of the dangers -- things like would we turn an anti-drug effort into a counter guerrilla war? Obviously, the two were intimately interlinked, but in our approach to the Congress in particular we were careful to focus on the drug effort. We had, of course, to bring General McCaffrey's people in, he was the White House drug czar, and make sure that he was comfortable with this effort. We had justice people, we had AID development people, we had intelligence support and collection, we had whatever government focus there was. We had several military representatives, The Joint Chiefs, the unified command CINCSOUTH, as well as the DOD people who were represented mainly by their special operations folks.

But it was interesting because at the very beginning it was clear the intelligence briefings we got were what one would call a little bit of an out of body experience. But they sat in on all our meetings and they began to understand where we were going and what would be useful. That helped and it was immediately interesting to see how after a series of meetings how relevant our intelligence support became. They had very little idea in the beginning of what would be useful, but very quickly by bringing them into the meetings and having them take a part in the process, they got it. They didn't do a lot of the operational stuff although there was a significant intelligence piece of this because collection against drug traffickers and collection against the guerrilla groups and the paramilitary groups that were supporting drug trafficking was a very important part of the activity.

*Q: With OMB did they sort of have generic questions or were there people within OMB who were pretty well plugged into the situation in Colombia?*

PICKERING: I thought that they were not as well plugged in as they might have been in terms of understanding the situation. They relied on us to explain all that to them. They had the usual questions, why do you need so much money and why are these apparent imbalances in the programs, why don't you do more of this particular effort and why don't you do less here and why should we be doing this at all, that kind of thing? They asked what one would call the usual legitimate questions that come out of people who mind the money.

*Q: Yeah. What about Congress? You have a real problem within our government of essentially almost a hostile Congress with the Clinton administration and it was Jesse Helms who was well sort of Latin America was his focus.*

PICKERING: Yes, Jesse was inclined to be supportive. We were fighting bad people and doing from his perspective good things. I think he was less enthusiastic about the reform proposals. The Democrats were quite hostile because there had been very significant human rights violations by the Colombian military in the past. These kinds of things hung on and so they

wanted to know how we were going to avoid that. They were afraid as well that we were headed toward another Vietnam -- with mission creep and all of that. Well, we in effect had already adopted a position that we would work only with the vetted units -that is hand-picked people whose backgrounds were reviewed. We would only support the units that had been vetted that way. So that gave us at least a reasonable approach to dealing with the concerns that they had.

*Q: Did you find within the Colombian structure you almost had to handpick whom you dealt with?*

PICKERING: No, we couldn't do that as much as rely on Pastrana to be helpful, although if we had to push back against some people we went to him. He was pretty adept at picking what I would call younger, well-educated, often U.S.-educated Colombians, some of whom may have come out of the business world, some of them came out of the government or academic world. They were well equipped to do the job. They understood the local situation and they had leg drive, so this was extremely helpful for us in the main. There was a very strong position in the Congress to trust the Colombian police but not the armed forces. The then head of the Colombian police had made a serious impression with a number of members of both houses -- that he was a serious person, honest wanting to work hard to deal with issues. His own aura in the Congress helped us a good deal in getting legislation through as long as we could keep him on side. Of course he wanted obviously to have the police well treated in the assistance programs and there was good reason to do that. This was not a misalignment of the programs but all those questions had to be worked out.

*Q: Well during the time you were there, it could be four years or about that...*

PICKERING: About that almost three and a half.

*Q: Three and a half years, how did the Colombia situation play out?*

PICKERING: Well it was bad and going downhill and continued to go downhill. I'm happy to say that recent reports have indicated that because this was a continuity issue with the Bush administration, that what seeds we had sown seem to have come along pretty well. They are not anywhere near having finished off the narcotics trafficking and if anything it's been harder to deal with that than anybody though. That was partly because we are having and had great effectiveness in aerial spraying which meant that in order to combat that, the illicit growers went deeper into the jungle and carved out smaller patches and spread themselves around. They could find plenty of people to do this because the returns were so lucrative. Then the problem became could we get Colombian forces to go in, find the plots and uproot them by hand. The growers were not all guerillas, but sometimes poor campesinos in search of a better income. Drug cultivation paid well. The proceeds also funded the guerillas.

Early on Pastrana had agreed in his first days, when he was weakest, to allow the major guerilla organization, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) to have a large safe haven in the center of country to rest, rearm and re-equip. There were even some arms drops there by international arms traffickers from places like Russia. This area was a constant problem.

*Q: Were there any other...well let's talk how about Mexico, did Mexico raise much of a problem?*

PICKERING: Mexico was an important and serious interest for us. We didn't have, as I recall, a lot of Mexican issues that required long time-focused attentions. We had the meeting of the cabinet secretaries on both sides on relevant issues including border problems. There was no question at all that immigration and illegal immigration continued to affect and influence the U.S.-Mexican relationship. The effort in the Clinton administration had been more closely beginning at the top and then to bring the cabinet secretaries in on a regular basis. We did a number of programs where that continued to go ahead.

*Q: Did you get any feel for Clinton's regard for Mexico?*

PICKERING: I think that he understood as a neighbor that we had a particularly important relationship. I recall he attended the meetings with warlords and the Mexican president. I don't know if whether it was Zedillo or after Zedillo, in any event that did not seem in my view in the Mexican relationship to be one of especially of particular difficulty.

*Q: Was Cuba just sort of there and then sort of...*

PICKERING: Cuba was there. There was no question at all that while in the first administration we had some discussions with the Cubans, they didn't get anywhere. It was also no question at all that increasingly our interest in Cuba and our focus in Cuba was something the secretary was interested in. She went to Miami on a number of occasions and talked to the Cuban-American community. Her counselor, Wendy Sherman, took a strong interest in that as Wendy did in Korea. That was the set of issues, which had what I would call 80 percent domestic political content and 20 percent foreign affairs.

*Q: Central America which of course you've been involve in was that pretty quiet at this point?*

PICKERING: Reasonably quiet. There were always small difficulties, but I don't recall a serious set of problems. I took a special interest in so far as I could in what was going on in El Salvador and where that process was going. Nicaragua had changed hands and it seemed to be OK. Costa Rica was seen to be moving along pretty well. Honduras, OK, Guatemala kind of was always scratchy, never quite sure that things had ever been brought back on an even keel if they ever were about to be.

*Q: Anywhere else? Chile? Argentina?*

PICKERING: Not big issues that I think came into my space often. Occasionally, we had an extradition issue or sometimes an effort to talk. We had spent a lot of time working on Peru and Ecuador and the settlement of that boundary dispute left over from the 1940s. I was continuing to work with Luigi Einaudi was working on that from the OAS point of view. Occasionally Pete Romero would ask me to talk to either the Ecuadorian or the Peruvian ambassadors and bring them in for some points on ways in which we thought they could be helpful in moving the process along. Indeed the process was brought to conclusion. So it was from that perspective the



settlement of one of the longest outstanding and most neuralgic of Latin American border controversies.

*Q: There again I'm told of a...*

PICKERING: Along with Brazil, Argentina and Chile...

*Q: It starts in the 1940s.*

PICKERING: In '42 it started.

*Q: In '42 yeah. How about the colossus to the south Brazil? Brazil is very important and all but it just doesn't seem to weigh very heavily.*

PICKERING: Well it was interesting partly with some prodding and suggestions from Pete, we thought it was a good idea to develop what was a kind of the dialogue between myself and my opposite number, the State Secretary the Brazilian foreign ministry. We began a set of dialogues that the Brazilians seem to appreciate. They hadn't had anything quite like that with the U.S. up until then. I went down several times. We had a general set of discussions of questions that were on the horizon for both countries that we could work with. They had a series of bilateral issues- they wanted to do space launches near the equator on the coast. We were concerned about proliferation and space launch technology so we had questions there. They were working on building a radar system for their jungle areas to try to control over flights, which are pretty widely used in Brazil to move illicit cargos, drugs mostly, back and forth.

*Q: This is coming out of Bolivia and other...*

PICKERING: Bolivia and Peru and even out of Colombia or transiting toward Colombia and then to the States. They were engaged in the early stages of putting that radar together.

*Q: Do we have or were we working with them on essentially a shoot down policy or not?*

PICKERING: I think we left it to them to decide what they would do with respect to intrusions. We had some capability of alerting their system to things coming along toward them through an over the horizon radar capacity of ours, but not in any kind of discreet tracking. That they had to do. Some of that came later so it was after my time so I'm not sure how much that has really gotten along.

*Q: What about our neighbor to the north Canada?*

PICKERING: I'm trying to think of what we had going with Canada. I think I went to Canada a couple of times to talk to them. I can't remember, we may have brought the seaward boundary in the Arctic Ocean Alaska to conclusion, the north boundary. I don't know if we solved the Gulf of Maine then or earlier but there were some boundary issues.

*Q: I'm sure there was fishing I mean...*

PICKERING: There were always fishing questions.

*Q: John Quincy Adams I can say about fishing.*

PICKERING: But I can't remember that there was anything really big with Canada. It tended to be episodic. In the under secretary job you tend to be used by folks when they had a particular issue they'd like to have you talk to a foreign ambassador or make a visit about, on just to heighten the level of the approach to it. You are somewhat short of the secretary and somewhat longer up the line than the assistant secretary. They tended to see you playing that role on those kinds of questions. So you got assignments like that from time to time to be helpful.

*Q: Did you find that as the undersecretary you were used as sort of the designated batter to meet all sorts of officials? I mean this must have used up quite a bit of your time didn't it?*

PICKERING: Yes we met a certain number of visitors. I did a certain amount of accepting letters of credentials from new ambassadors, which was fine; I enjoyed seeing new folks in town. If the secretary were out of town or busy and the bureau had somebody visiting they wanted you to talk to you would do that. More than that in some places like in South Asia you tended to have a continuing brief you would work with people on the other side. I would see such people regularly and sometimes go out there. Colombia presented as an issue some of the same kind of things.

One of the roles was to be the U.S. political director in the Group of 8. I met frequently in the run up to the G-8 summits with my opposite numbers from the G-8 countries, many of whom I had worked with, they were old friends, in preparing the political aspects of the summit. On a couple of those occasions in probably '98, '99, 2000 we were heavily engaged in either Bosnia or Kosovo. The foreign ministers meeting and we would join them took place in June. We used those to discuss next steps, put out statements bringing the 8 together on a key issue and they were effective on Bosnia and Kosovo. The drawback was that we were only engaged in the run-up to the G-8 economic summit in June, essentially from February to June, after which the meetings didn't begin again until the next February. Then we would meet separately and prepare the next meetings. We were actively engaged in current statements by the G-8 on Bosnia. We were actively engaged at the time of the Birmingham Summit in '98 with the resumption of India and Pakistan tests and things of that sort. So we would often get involved in the G-8 context in cooperative efforts among the foreign ministers or sometimes even at our level with statements that reflected a joint policy position with respect to some current issue that needed early and urgent handling.

*Q: OK well we'll stop at this point.*

PICKERING: Great.

*Q: The next time we will pick this up where we are dealing with your time as undersecretary of state for political affairs and Tom we've covered your dealing sort of at the top with Madeleine Albright, with the NSC and some other things. We've also covered Latin America plus Canada.*

*Then we'll sort of move geographically around and then there are some very major issues that have come up and we'll pick them up as well.*

PICKERING: We should mention that during this period near the end Madeleine Albright made the decision to include Canada in the Western hemisphere bureau. We changed the name of the bureau to Western Hemisphere Affairs WHA but it made a lot of sense. Prior to that, Canada was considered as part of Europe and that was always a little bit always awkward. Some considered the WHA step to be an elevation of Canadian independence and the Canadians themselves indicated no really strong preference either way. So when they were considered as part of the western hemisphere bureau I think they responded reasonably well.

*Q: OK, so we haven't talked about on the western hemisphere side.*

PICKERING: Well I did some work in the OAS too and we can talk a little bit about that.

*Q: We'll talk about the OAS and also about the free trade treaties and how that impinged on your work and all. Then we'll move on and one other thing I do want to talk about is the demise of USIA and that.*

PICKERING: Great.

*Q: Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of ...*

PICKERING: It's tax day.

*Q: It's the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, the Ides of April 2008. Tom, so you were talking about the OAS. In the first place did the western hemisphere one has the feeling that this doesn't focus at the top level of the administration very much the western hemisphere.*

PICKERING: Well it does and it doesn't. I think that in my time there were several issues that I got involved in. One most intensively was, of course, Colombian and since it has been so long since we talked I'm not sure how much we talked about Colombia but we put that on the agenda in any event. The others were efforts within the western hemisphere in effect to promote democracy -- in large measure to promote in the Council of the OAS resolutions which would say that states would ostracize or otherwise not deal with other states in the hemisphere that had through coup d'etat or other illegal means and not through democratic processes change governments. These took quite a while. I remember we had one OAS meeting in Windsor, Ontario, in Canada and we worked very closely with the Canadian foreign minister. The effort there was to get passage of the text of a resolution to strengthen the democratic tilt of the OAS. We were able to do that although there were as many reasons as there were states that were opposed. We had quite a lively debate and the Canadians were enormously helpful in getting that done.

*Q: You know the Canadians were lumped into the western hemisphere but they seem so apart from it and I would think what to be helpful but what influence or interest did they have in Latin America?*

PICKERING: Well as you probably know and I'm not an expert in Canadian policy but over the years Canada has in a sense turned its attention and eyes toward Latin America. So everything from the fact that the Caribbean islands were great vacation spots for Canadians in part because they were part of the Commonwealth and they had fairly easy access and in part because they got tired of driving to Florida. That raised questions and then I think all through the '80s and '90s. Certainly the Canadians followed with great attention what was happening in Central America and began to see significant amounts of their trade with the hemisphere. They are after all geographically very much part of the hemisphere. As we mentioned at the end of our last discussion we decided among one of the reform steps in the department that we were engaged in finally taking Canada out of the European bureau. It had been because I think from time immemorial it had been considered a Commonwealth country and Commonwealth countries were hard to assign elsewhere anyway. It was English speaking so sure it probably should go to Europe for all those obvious reasons.

*Q: They also had troops in NATO and that sort of thing.*

PICKERING: They had troops in NATO, it was a member of the North Atlantic Alliance, we had a kind of seamless defense enterprise with Canada. It had been deeply engaged militarily in both world wars in Europe and so for all of those kinds of things it made sense and the European bureau was kind of the father bureau. Things evolved over a period of time, but it just stayed there. Since the hemisphere was seen basically as an Hispanic enterprise it was kind of odd to insert into that a two-thirds English speaking one-third Latin language speaking country. Much of the Quebec business we forget but the Quebecers didn't have a natural affinity necessarily with the Hispanic world, but it was thought to be probably reasonable to do so in 1998-99. In the end the Canadians didn't object. In fact, we do have a very special relationship with Canada in terms of border management, trade issues -for all that period of time Canada was our largest trading partner and they understood that they would be treated in a serious way. In fact, both the European bureau and then the WHA bureau as they were called the new western hemisphere affairs had a deputy assistant secretary permanently assigned to dealing with Canadian affairs.

*Q: Keeping with Canada did we find that I realize they are equals but was there a certain amount of let the Canadians go first in deal with some of these problems since we're the big bad boy in the western hemisphere?*

PICKERING: No, I think that's a much more attitudinal relationship that came beginning in the late '90s in a few cases. I think now in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that may be more of an attitude issue. It was always helpful that Canada had participated worldwide in almost every peace keeping mission. The Canadians have been in at the beginning of peacekeeping and senior Canadian political officials supported those and took the lead. It was important then that Canada's kind of broad international interests and its relative size meant that it wasn't seen as the elephant in the garden patch the way we were. It was always helpful as we went ahead to make sure that Canada was with us and that we understood their concerns, took them seriously and listened to their advice. I certainly found that at the UN, it was helpful to have the Canadians not only on our side but also doing some of the thinking. They had perspectives and ideas that were

sometimes very valuable and not necessarily the first things that came to mind here in Washington.

*Q: How did you find the Canadian diplomatic representation? The things that came out of the Canadians would they be...*

PICKERING: In general very good, they are a very professional diplomatic service. I can remember as far back as Geneva in the early 1960s it was good to work with them and their young officers were first rate. Many Canadians still see us as Americans and themselves as Canadians. We are both part of the North American hemisphere of course. The Canadians also I think were very happy to develop a trilateral relationship beginning before NAFTA, coming out of NAFTA, and now certainly continuing with Mexico. The whole upper territory of the western hemisphere from the Guatemala-Belize-Mexican border north has some of its own very interesting trade arrangements. The U.S. happens to be in the center. I don't think Mexican-Canadian trade is huge, but it's there and Canadians began to look at the rest of the hemisphere as important. There were some very good Canadian diplomats who specialized in western hemisphere affairs. They learned Spanish. The Canadians set up their own embassy here in Washington to the OAS, -- they were members. I don't know when they became members, but sometime ago. So what one would call this shift away from Canada in a purely Euro centric focus to what one would call Canada both in a global focus and also in having a strong interest in the western hemisphere all made sense in geography and policy. Yesterday Madeleine Albright received her portrait over at the State Department and both she and Secretary Rice spoke. I think it was she who said that one of her, partly I think in jest but partly serious, that one of her reform proposals was to move Canada from Europe where it had been for centuries in the State Department to the western hemisphere where it had mainly always been geographically and this, of course, had made some sense.

*Q: Did you see Cuba as sort of the symbol of Canadians showing that they could stick it to the United States or anything like that?*

PICKERING: No I think not. In some cases we understood that Canada's relationships with Cuba could be helpful in an indirect way, particularly because a large number of people in the State Department felt as I did, that we should try to find new ways to open up better relations with Cuba. This I think is what Secretary Albright thought, but Secretary Albright obviously was also very much enmeshed in what I would call the currents of U.S. domestic politics. U.S. politics meant, and she worked hard to do this, that we should develop in our Cuban policy still a strong relationship with Miami. Miami then, which was nearly a decade, over a decade ago, was still in the hands of what I would call the immigrant generation, not the second generation. The second generation is coming along and we will see some impact of that. The immigrant generation was split, but generally speaking heavily focused in terms of those who had lost property, money, station in life and indeed their homeland -- focused very strongly on Fidel Castro. They did not want the United States to relent on the economic embargo or to do other things that would in one way or another turn the process toward what I would have considered and still consider a smarter policy with respect to Cuba. So the policy was driven along what one would call those iron-clad lines of isolation and pressure on Cuba as opposed to what I think would have been a smarter policy -- which would have made the approach a little more mixed. It would have put us in much

closer touch with the Cuban people in terms of their future. Now with Raoul as successor, we have a new opportunity to do that. I don't see this administration moving toward that but the next administration in 2009 will have that chance. I was involved in and out with Cuba, but it became clear that despite the fact that in the first Clinton administration we had endeavored to have some conversations with Cuba, the Cubans seemingly at least in the second Clinton administration were for their own reasons not prepared to do much to advance in that direction. Cuban hardliners in Havana have got to like the embargo. For my money it helps keep them in power.

*Q: Well in many ways our policy has been a strong supporter of the Castro regime. You now have an enemy and to be unyielding and we aided and abetted.*

PICKERING: I think if we had been more supple, maybe and a little more flexible over a period of time, the problem might not have been so easy for Castro to deal with. Certainly, I think in the long run if we had established even an opportunity for tourism there would have been a lot more possibility to meet with, support financially and influence the Cuban public. As a result, we would have had a stake in the relationship with the people of Cuba to deal with rather than purely a negative quotient.

*Q: Well the Helms-Burton Law when did that come about?*

PICKERING: Well I'm trying...I don't remember.

*Q: But essentially I have the feeling that it basically penalized anybody who utilized property that had been taken over by the Cuban government and there were penalties including not allowing visas to the families...*

PICKERING: Sure, and this affected some including some important Spanish families who had invested in former properties, I think in tourism resources, one of the big Spanish hotel chains got caught up in this.

*Q: I thought that a lot of the impact was on the Canadians because the Canadians had been sort of pushing investment and all.*

PICKERING: One or two and I don't recall that quite frankly, it was not something that I think was a big issue for me at the time that I was under secretary.

*Q: Well before we turn away from Latin America what about Central America was this a pretty quiet time?*

PICKERING: It had become pretty quiet. As I noted in our earlier interviews, El Salvador had settled down mostly by '91 and they were then in an implementation phase of the peace agreement. It was difficult for them, but they were not involved in an active conflict. The FMLN was pursuing its own political future inside El Salvador and the police force was being recruited, trained and equipped and utilized and cleaned up to the extent as possible. In Honduras, there had always been what one would call a sense of stability even though the governments were

heavily influenced by the military and vice versa. Over a period of time there was never a serious internal problem in Honduras in part because no one challenged the governmental system there.

Guatemala remained very difficult and very hard to deal with. They had a very large population of Indians and the very significant control particularly in the central government of Guatemala City in the hands of non-Indians -- Spanish in origin mainly. It meant that there were divisions and there were armed groups who exploited that. There were fierce military forays and very nasty attacks against Indians and obviously some significant problems in Guatemala in terms of assassinations and reprisals against the Indian ethnic community -- the Mayan origin community. Nicaragua had moved over to a non-Sandinista government. It was going along. The Nicaraguans didn't necessarily produce the world's most breathtaking people as their presidents. They went along and they've generally declined. Costa Rica was still the darling of the hemisphere; it later fell on hard times. While I didn't follow Panama too closely, it too was limping along after our military intervention there in the early '90s. Central America was not a huge preoccupation. In the rest of the hemisphere, Colombia was becoming for us a more and more significant problem as time went on in the second Clinton administration and certainly we can talk about what happened there. I'm not sure whether on previous tapes because we've been away for this for a while...

*Q: You've been away and I forget...*

PICKERING: I don't remember if we've done Colombia or not.

*Q: But let's cover but I think we have done Colombia but if not we'll check.*

PICKERING: Working through that you can check.

*Q: What about will we seeing any signs of unrest? We've got two countries today we should sort of raise their heads, Bolivia and Venezuela. I mean they...*

PICKERING: Well Chavez had moved in to take control in Venezuela. I went to see him and his people on a number of occasions. We were not yet at daggers drawn or in a loggerhead situation, but in my conversations with him, he made it clear that we didn't appreciate him the way we should. He felt his kind of populism- that he had employed to gain power in Venezuela -- was the wave of the future in the hemisphere. He had attempted earlier in a failed coup to take power and he emphasized his legitimacy on the basis of popularity. But he also emphasized that the previous political structure had failed. Indeed on a number of occasions John Maisto, he was our ambassador, had set this out. John when I came down would have me spend at least an evening with twenty or thirty people who represented basically the failed parties of the past. It was interesting and clear because we would speak around a large table and they would characterize the current situation in terms that were not antithetical to any of our analysis that things were bad. They would say that Chavez had his own kind of personal interest in where things would go, he was a populist and a man of limited capabilities and he was not a friend of the U.S. certainly in their view. But what would also be counter pointed around the table was their own clear failure to be able to mobilize any resources or any capacities in the political sphere. We were not talking revolution against Chavez, but we were talking about a political process which

was then open -- whether there was any chance they had of reforming traditional parties or creating new parties -- to be able in the end to be effective in contending in the elections with Chavez. So they complained about what they thought were serious or at least growing abuses on his part of the political process and growing reliance on the military and to some extent even then it was clear that while he was fairly new he was suffering at least from some of the difficulties of incumbency. Outside of his own political effort, Venezuela was pretty much disunited with no real opposition in those days.

*Q: How about Bolivia was that a...*

PICKERING: I spent almost no time on Bolivia. Bolivia was Bolivia it was not in our view any better or any worse. There were people, if I remember, who were leading Bolivia who were reasonably friendly to us. They were not necessarily what one would call high-quality performers. Some of that I think led to what happened half a decade or a decade later in Bolivia in terms of shifts toward the Evo Morales who is now in power and were perhaps largely the result of fragmented and poor leadership in the late 90s.

*Q: What about the elephant in Latin America, Brazil?*

PICKERING: Well Brazil we worked hard with. Pete Romero who was assistant secretary for most of that time felt, as I did, that Brazil was an enormously important player and one that we should be paying attention to. Brazil and the United States had had over the year's tensions and difficulties. Brazil had moved forward to a more open electoral system away from the military rule of half a century ago toward the more open and dynamic political system. They were clearly interested in the United States and we were able without a lot of difficulty in effect to establish a dialogue in which I participated with my equivalent in the Brazilian foreign ministry. We had as I mentioned previously three or four meetings, some here and some in Brazil, to talk about what were some of the issues of concern to us both and how we could move ahead and what were our views both on the hemisphere and beyond the hemisphere. The Brazilians responded very positively to this. We were certainly able and prepared to take time to deal with them. We had problems with Brazil in some areas. They wanted us to make more use of and be more supportive of their development of a missile or a space vehicle launch facility on the Atlantic coast. We had some other differences in other areas. We would have liked the Brazilians to pay more attention to the galloping drug traffic, which in a sense often used their vast territory western Brazil as an air transit route from Bolivia north. I don't think they actually stopped and refueled in Brazil but we weren't sure. Brazil was building a radar line across northern Brazil to patrol their own airspace. So there were things going on that were interesting that were part of our bilateral effort.

*Q: Well did we use the Brazilian diplomatic corps has a reputation of being a very fine one. But did you find that you could use the Brazilian approach toward Latin America as giving you a different view point...its Latin American interests or not?*

PICKERING: Well, I think that we understood several things. One, that the Brazilian diplomats in the foreign ministry were well trained and of high quality and generally performed well. That they certainly reflected in a very serious way Brazilian interests which were not always shared



American interests and there were some things we could agree on and some things where we would disagree. That Brazil had begun to develop its own ideas about the southern cone, as a closed trading system and this was antithetical to our views of having broader more open access and trade to all of Latin America was an irritant. So this began to be a kind of nagging and difficult issue. How and in what way could Mercosur be incorporated into a broader trading relationship with the rest of the hemisphere and was Brazil in effect headed into a kind of 'this is our region stay out approach' was important. We were always concerned about tension between Brazil and Argentina about who should play the most significant role. I think within the last decade obviously the inability of the Argentines to get their act together and growing Brazilian economic strength has shifted the balance now quite cogently and quite strongly in toward Brazil. Chile had always played what I called the high quality end of the hemisphere in terms of education, training, economic development, level of life and other things. Peru was going through turmoil in its leadership as it pretty consistently does. Fujimori in those days was in his decline, but nevertheless we were still close to him on some of the things that were going on and we were particularly concerned about this combination of an insurgency and narcotics development in Peru.

*Q: Were the Shining Path and the narcotics people sort of getting together or...?*

PICKERING: Sendero Luminoso and the narcotics problem -- at least in its totality, Sendero diverted Peruvian resources against total concentration on narcotics. We had some indication that while Sendero was principally a political movement it had some interest in keeping the narcotics process alive and going as well.

*Q: How about with Argentina what was...here is a country that seemed to have everything and yet the sum of its parts comes out almost as a negative?*

PICKERING: Yes, when I went down, and I forget probably some of my trips to Argentina were maybe while I was at the UN, and one or two may have been as under secretary. The governments in those days were fairly stable. Terry Todman was there at least part of the time as ambassador. It may have been his last assignment. My sense was that the Argentine foreign minister particularly in those days was friendly and helpful and we got along well. I know that Madeleine had been quite close to her Argentine colleague in New York who was helpful in moving things ahead. So there were individual relationships there as well as one would call state-to-state relationships, which were helpful.

*Q: Well then I can't remember. Do you remember did we talk about Europe at this point?*

PICKERING: I don't know that we had, no.

*Q: I don't. Why don't we talk about in the first place what was sort of the European issues that came up, the main issues that came up?*

PICKERING: Well I think that overall we had the EU continuing to want to come together. We had the early efforts, I think, the St Malo agreement between the British and French to try to begin to establish both an EU military interest and British participation in that were interesting.

There was clearly an effort that Jacques Chirac was interested in to develop some military capability in the EU outside of NATO. Our determination was at least to have, put it this way, the beginning of the evolution of a policy toward NATO having the right of first refusal in dealing with European military questions, questions that might involve deployment of forces and so on.

The Balkans were a huge preoccupation for all of us in Europe. By then we had gotten through Dayton, and by then Bosnia was kind of settling in. But it was very clear and the handwriting was on the wall that Kosovo was next and not being handled well. It was going to become, in fact, a second point of difficult contention as indeed it did in the second Clinton administration between the Serbs and the rest of us. But the Russians obviously wanted to play some Serbian cards in their hand in Europe and were also as a result difficult to deal with over the evolving Kosovo situation. Kosovo took a lot of Secretary Albright's time. We had negotiating efforts to see, in France, whether in fact some modus vivendi could be worked out between those representing an interest in an independent Albanian dominated Kosovo and the Serbs. They never really quite came to fruition. We saw instead an increased use of force on both sides. There were massacres, we had strong demands on Serbia to behave and we had a bombing campaign and then at the end of that, we had in effect a internationalization of the Kosovo province through the placement of mainly NATO, but not exclusively NATO forces in the area.

*Q: Well before we turn to the whole Kosovo thing let's talk about the EU. In a way how did we during the time you were undersecretary from when to when?*

PICKERING: I was under secretary roughly from the end of April or the beginning of May 1997 until the last day of 2000.

*Q: What was our attitude toward the EU because this was essentially an American dream to begin with right?*

PICKERING: Our attitude is the one that we've always had which is basically a great deal of support and backing in principle and serious objections when it comes to particular issues such as trade and serious problems when it comes to other particular issues, especially in the security arena. We did not particularly want to see the EU in effect replace NATO and as a result extinguish both U.S. military interest and commitment to Europe. In general, the Europeans wanted to placate the French by seeing it develop this sort of semi-independent capability on the one hand but they wanted to remain totally coupled to the U.S. deterrent on the other. We were a long way from the Soviet threat and indeed during that period of time, Russia went through its probable nadir with the financial crisis of August 1998. The Russian threat was not in that sense hugely palpable although Europeans knew and understood, as we did, that the Russians still retained a very significant nuclear force.

*Q: What was behind the sort of British and French making movement toward a joint force? What would it do as my understanding is that outside of within Europe they can't, they don't have the air capability, transport capability to do anything.*

PICKERING: Well I think partly it was an exercise in euro nationalism. It was also an exercise in creating within the military sphere what they were attempting to do in the foreign affairs sphere, that is, a progression toward however imperfectly a more united Europe around security issues on the one hand and foreign policy on the other. It would be a complement to what they had done and gone way out ahead with in both economics and trade. So that was in part a way for the French to establish, to continue to establish their role as maybe a source of new ideas and a source of forward pressure in expanding Europeanism, obviously with France as one of the key pivots of making that happen. It took on in that sense from the U.S. perspective elements of an anti-U.S. policy. Over that period of time there was growing, particularly in Europe and with Chirac, this was not something that came totally out of the Bush administration, a strong sense of being a big and independent player on the world scene. Certainly a Gaullist phenomenon in that from the French national perspective and Chirac's own, it made sense. He was obviously going to be one of the five key leaders of the world and he was going to show that they were not totally subsumed in US sponsored projects, just as France had resisted becoming part of the NATO command structure.

*Q: How did you view the Chirac and his government at the time? Were they sort of the burr under the saddle or were there positive things coming out speaking to the American perspective?*

PICKERING: We were a burr under the saddle on a number of things. Certainly one of the big issues in that almost 40-year period was what to do with Iraq. There the French had gone from when I was in the Security Council last in 1992, particularly on Iraq, from being close allies and supporters of a general movement in which Britain, the U.S. and France led in the Security Council, to dealing with Iraq in a semi-independent and then in the end totally separate way. Part way through that period we spent a whole year negotiating a resolution on a new, more strengthened and reinforced inspection mechanism in Iraq for the UN. France among other things persisted in trying to find ways to water that down and stymie progress in the drafting, along with the Russians and the Chinese. In the end all five of us agreed to a text of the resolution and then the three of them -- France, Russia and China -- abstained when it came to voting. That sent Saddam a terrible signal that the P-5 in the Security Council had suddenly become divided in favor of him rather than against him, as France shifted its weight over on the other side with Russia and China. This led to more trouble with Saddam.

*Q: One got the feeling and this is from the outside that France and to a certain extent the Germans were sort of motivated by commercial interests more than anything else. Did you have that feeling?*

PICKERING: Well in Iraq there were three or four interests. It would be a mistake to say it was purely commercial. In those days there was a feeling that well Iraq has gone through the crisis of the invasion of Kuwait. Saddam has survived. The French had a strong commercial relationship with Saddam. It was time, in fact, to get the sanctions off. Saddam was not a menace or a problem. The UN was gradually through its inspection mechanism finding that Saddam was not a nuclear power and had little or no capability in the chemical and biological weapons area, something that the U.S. had disputed. I think in the end probably wrongly, but nevertheless that's what the U.S. view was and so we had a rift there.

Secondly, you may not know, but Chirac had had a long-standing personal connection with Iraq and Saddam and indeed there are at least books that assert that in his first campaign to become mayor of Paris, he was financially heavily supported by Iraq and Saddam. So he had some interest there. He had some debts, not as many as the Russians had, for military equipment sold in the '80s in the Iran-Iraq war where they had been open to doing that and the French hoped to collect. They also saw a future Middle East with Iran and Saddam around -- after all, we had all not collectively marched to Baghdad in 1991. So we had to live with the facts on the ground and if it meant some economic and commercial advantage for France to accept that reality, that was probably something that they were interested in doing.

On our side we had still from our perspective serious uncertainties about what Saddam was doing in the weapons of mass destruction area. We wanted to keep the pressure on him. We in effect said that the sanctions would not come off until Saddam left which was just an un-written amendment of what the resolution said. But we could enforce it with our veto because it took a positive action of the Council to remove those sanctions. The resolution (687) actually said in quite clear terms that if Saddam complied the resolution the sanctions would come off. So we had differences with them about what should happen

While the French continued to keep military air in the region they were less willing than the British to fly with us on patrols to assure that the no-fly zones were observed by Iraq. The French also had a view that the weight of opinion in the Arab world was moving toward their position -- well we have Saddam, he's here, he is one of us, he may be a real SOB from our point of view but he's our SOB. So in effect we need probably continue to keep him in a box, but we also need to find ways to keep open lines of communication so he doesn't become either a problem or we don't see the area falling into messy pieces.

*Q: Well we kept the mindset that we did not feel that Iraq posed a danger to us.*

PICKERING: Well we began to think that if we could see a nuclear weapon development in Iraq that would not be something we would like to have, either in the region or in the world at all. We had a non-proliferation interest, we had a non-proliferation interest heightened by what we had felt was reckless behavior on the part of Saddam heightened by what we felt was an abusive punitive and nasty regime which kept a significant share of its own people under its thumb. He maintained a large military force the capability of which we consistently over estimated, but we did that out of the necessity of assuring that we were not surprised as we were in August 1990.

*Q: Did you sense that there was a strong nation or whatever you want to call it, political movement that was out to finish off Iraq and sort of clean up from the Gulf War? I'm talking about the neo-con movement.*

PICKERING: It was out there, but it was highly isolated. I was disturbed that the Clinton administration went along with, I wouldn't say it provoked it, but didn't fight very hard a resolution on the part of the Congress, stimulated by this neo-con group and stimulated by obvious dislike and distaste for Saddam in the United States, that in effect said we were in favor of regime change. It authorized some money to be taken from the defense department to support this; I think \$100 million. The real truth was there was no money there or we had great trouble

getting money, but we did establish relationships as a result of that with a group of Iraqi Nationalist Movements in exile including Shabab and others. Frank Ricciardone became a major liaison with this group. I went up and talked to them. They were an interesting group from Hashemite monarchists to Kurdish nationalists across the entire spectrum. We supported and spoke with him in part to stay in touch. I don't think we misled them into believing that things would happen and you know this came in the aftermath of a failed effort which I think probably took place in '96 in which Saddam after lots and lots of effort by us to develop both inside Iraq and outside Iraq a system of intelligence reporting and perhaps close contacts with people who might be serious opponents of Saddam tried to push him out. He rolled them all up and penetrated most if not all of it and we lost all our assets and a lot of people lost their lives as a result. So there was that failed effort out there. It was sort of a Bay of Pigs 2.0.

*Q: Well what about Iran? What was our attitude toward Iran, our outlook let's say?*

PICKERING: Well our outlook in that administration toward Iran was that it was a big and important country that we should have some contacts and relationships with and after Khatemi's election with a seemingly liberal progressive reformer as president we should try to reach out. We then did some reaching out and we used both the Swiss channel and a speech by Madeleine Albright, parts of which turned out were not well received from the Iranian point of view, to see if we could in fact start a process of discussions. At one point I think we even suggested in the Swiss channel that I and Martin Indyk, who was then assistant secretary and maybe one other person from the NSC, would be willing to sit down and talk with them officially...

*Q: You weren't going to take a cake with you though?*

PICKERING: No, we had no bibles and no cake. We had learned those lessons and we had no feel for the issue, we had not gotten to the point where we even decided where this would take place or anything of that sort. But they never responded so there was never really any answer to that.

*Q: What were you getting? Let's stick to the Iran, Iraq situation. How well do you feel that you were served by our intelligence agencies?*

PICKERING: I think that we understood in Iraq and Iran we had very limited resources and limited contacts. What we were seeing was in that sense a reflection of the paucity of information. Certainly we were constantly on the alert -- was there any kind of serious opposition that would take hold inside Iraq -- there didn't seem to be. Inside Iran we were obviously like everybody else aware of the hard-line tendencies and trends that existed and of a governmental framework built around a theocratic approach. With lots and lots of serious uncertainties about where things would go or what was going to happen in that context we had little to go on. As a result, I we got information, but also several different assessments on where things were really going, particularly on Iran were very isolated.

*Q: Were we taking the long look at Iran and saying, "OK, they've got this revolution which isn't producing terribly well for its people, sort of a divided government, but with the computers, the*

*internet, a very savvy new generation coming along, give them more and more and they'll probably...things will come out alright or were we...how do you feel about this?*

PICKERING: Well I think that we were less certain that there would be generational change and re-westernization of Iran. We saw a very tight hold by the 'mullah-ocracy' on the processes. Efforts over time tended to loosen or tighten the political strings. As a result, the repression that held things in place in Iran seemed to be able to control developments there. We were concerned even then by Iranian nuclear interests and we were concerned then by what clearly were serious efforts by the Iranians to support Hezbollah in its various actions. We assumed a willingness to use terror tactics in part against us and in part against the Israeli's which was disturbing to us. We had what were a series very difficult issues to deal with. They were then maybe even more implacably against any Middle East peace process than they are now. They have kind of come around and said what's ok with the Palestinians will be OK with us. But they were tough and so we had a serious agenda of difficulties with them that continued and, of course. We had in times almost active use of military force against them in the re-flagging of tankers, mining activities they undertook in the Gulf and our attacks on their oil platforms in return. We attacked some of their oil platforms prior to this period of time, but that was the legacy of tension and difficulty. We didn't have direct contacts inside Iran or with Iranians. The Swiss were our channel; the British and others who were there -- Italians, Australians -- gave us their sense of what was going on. but it was always in a kind of imperfect feeling for what was happening.

*Q: OK, today is the 3rd of June 2008. Tom, let's talk about you're back in Washington and you are looking at Russia at that time. This was an interesting time. Russia was pretty much in a depth wasn't it at this time.*

PICKERING: Yes. Strobe Talbot was deputy secretary. Strobe had had a special interest in Russia. Strobe had in the first years of the Clinton administration been basically ambassador at large and special assistant, which really meant that he was assistant secretary for the old Soviet Union after it broke up. When he became deputy secretary that area stayed separate. Jim Collins came back from Moscow where he had been DCM and Charge. Jim took over as sort of the virtual assistant secretary in that area working very closely with Strobe.

*Q: I would like to pick up sort of the thought, the atmosphere and all because this is sort of a...well this was a crucial period.*

PICKERING: It was the end of Yeltsin. I left Russia at the end of 1996. Yeltsin had had his heart repaired, he had come back, he was not taking care of himself, he was still there, What happened, of course, was that by the time of the Asian financial crisis in 1998, leading up to August 1998, the international economic situation particularly with respect to Russia took a downturn. One of the interesting, at least theories of this is that the Russians were financing a lot of their government expenditure on the basis of government bonds in Russia called GKO's. GKO's paid initially really high interest rates so they were attractive to foreign investors, but they had to pay high interest rates to fund Russia's debt and were used to offset the high risk in the fact that the oil price was very low. Russia was not making a lot of income. The old Communist economy had collapsed. The ability both to reform and regenerate an economy that stood on its own feet outside of the oil patch was very limited. Russia was having very difficult times. These GKO's

attracted a lot of Asian investors, particularly Koreans. When the Asian financial collapse took place someone told me the Koreans took about \$5 billion out of Russia in the GKO market in 2 days which led to the collapse of the financial structure supporting the Russian state which led to a run on the rubble, which led to the crash. It was the down turn- the nadir of the Russian economy.

Then there was a long difficult struggle to come back, but in the course of which Yeltsin yet again underwent basically another revaluation of the rubble and the Russians themselves who had already lost on a previous revaluation of the rubble as he did I suspect it was in '94. Russians were once again assailed by the notion that their currency had no value and that those who held anything in that currency were automatically strapped. It hit particularly hard people who were on pensions and retirement because the new valued rubble didn't keep up in terms of the income -- pension payments -- they needed to stay alive. It was a very difficult time in Russia. Russians remember this pretty much as a kind of hallmark of the memory of Yeltsin -- so everything that Yeltsin tried to do to bring about change in Russia seemed to have been undermined in large measure in people's views of the collapse of '98.

That in turn led Yeltsin to think about what was the future of his country, where it was going to go and particularly about succession. Even with his heart repair, he was not in robust health and I think had determined early along that he would not try to seek a third term. The Russian constitution blocked that and he was not going to find his way around that. Over that period of time he had been looking for a successor and interestingly enough a man from St. Petersburg by the name of Putin came into his sights. I knew Putin when I was ambassador in Russia as the deputy mayor of St. Petersburg for Anatoly Sobchak who was a lawyer and a reformer who had his own problems and subsequently died, I think, but it is not sure of natural causes. His wife was very much mixed up in contracts and such things like that could hardly be said to be salubrious. Putin came out of that nexus, had a reputation for being a fairly good administrator, had no reputation necessarily for being anti-reform, but it was very clear both to our consulate general in St. Petersburg at the time and to others that he had come from the Committee for State Security (KGB) and its overseas service in Germany, in Dresden. He had been reassigned probably about the time of the fall of communism to St. Petersburg as the man in charge of watching over the university. It provided the KGB with someone who was looking at both recruitment and also the behavior folks in the university. He studied law as I recall while there. He was then picked up by Sobchak and the story was that he had taken courses from Sobchak as he had become interested in the law and legal issues. He then apparently left the KGB, at least in those days, although some say you never leave the KGB. He operated as deputy mayor. He had a somewhat checkered record in those days; some felt that he was both anti-foreign investment and maybe not totally honest in his dealings. Others said that they saw no signs of that and he helped business. So it was a checkered record in which there were differing views.

I saw him then on several occasions and noted that he was laconic, tight lipped, a good listener but I suppose on the basis of his intelligence training not much of an imparter of information.

He was brought to Moscow after I left by Yeltsin. I believe his first job in Moscow under Yeltsin about this time was deputy head of the Kremlin administration. The Kremlin is a large apparatus that handles a lot of money; it in fact it is a parallel government structure. It is more robust than

the White House or the NSC staff and operates in many various areas. The administration of the Kremlin looks after the president and the president's needs as well as of many other people closely associated with him. It is a reputed source of corruption. He reportedly did a good job and I believe then went to become head of the Kremlin administration and then soon was moved by Yeltsin to a very serious job where he became was head of the internal intelligence service, then known as the FSB. It was a key part of the old KGB which was broken up in 1992 and the FSB was the largest and most robust part of the former KGB, dedicated to insuring that domestic developments were all monitored and controlled. Putin seemed to prosper there and did very well and then was identified as someone who could become Yeltsin's, I think, fifth prime minister and he did. Yeltsin surprisingly before his term of office ran out, announced his departure and his nomination of Putin as his successor. That gave Putin an unbeatable edge, if you want to call it that, on the next electoral process for president.

So a lot of this was going on at that time. The U.S. was having an increasingly difficult time with the Russians. The Russians found it harder to come along with all the U.S. wanted. There was the beginning of what has become a more serious problem in U.S.-Russian relations -- a seemingly Russian backlash to U.S. leadership as a kind of shaping element of Russian policy.

*Q: Did you feel when you were on the seventh floor that we were becoming disenchanted with Yeltsin? Or were we kind of wedded to Yeltsin? We got wedded to Gorbachev at one point and I was wondering if whether we tended to focus on leaders?*

PICKERING: You know it's a complex and an interesting question. We tend like others, I think it's a human condition, someone called it the 'Stockholm Syndrome', to find once we start working with people, if we can move things along, if there is progress, if they are helpful, it is very hard to shift away. One question is do we have an alternative? Is that a bleaker option? We often come to believe that a person occupies an essential place in the structure of relations with a foreign country and not easy to drop or change and this is a realistic conclusion. Regime change is not our strong suit happily. It also involves an important issue of who follows, who comes after. But the notion that we have such influence even in smaller states that we can be successful at making such changes is a snare and a delusion. We have only to look at the historical instances of failure -- Iraq in the 2000's. Iran in the 50's and I would submit Guatemala and for a time at least Panama.

I think Gorbachev was an alternative, but we had no role in making that happen. He was different than Brezhnev and certainly Andropov and Chernenko who succeeded Brezhnev. Many pointed out that he had a sense of reality within their system about what changes were needed. Similarly, Yeltsin came in at a time when he was actively campaigning against Gorbachev whose relationships with the party at least, with key members of the party, were still very much a part of Gorbachev's preoccupations. From my talks with, Gorbachev, all of which took place during the Yeltsin period, led me to believe that he was unwilling to give up on communism but very seriously interested in changing many facets of it. He, in fact, looked at the world through spectacles that saw a changed, reformed, a kinder more gentle communism, but nevertheless communism -- lots of state ownership, state control, state decision-making in organizing the economy and political life, limited political choices on some types of things.



Yeltsin came at it from a different point of view. He said this whole structure is rotten and it has to go, it has led us to serious problems domestically and internationally, it is oppressive, it is, in fact, unfriendly to the human condition and it has to be dropped. He had no master plan and indeed, I think, there is no real master plan. How you change an entrenched 70-year old autocratic system based on ideals which exceed the human capacity to achieve them on the one hand and on the notion that somehow the state is the perfect instrument in the hands of the party to control the lives, the future of all aspect of what's going on in the country on the other. That is very hard.

Yeltsin began to move, that is he began to move toward liberal democracy and he put in place a new constitution. He in a number of key places made difficult decisions. They were not easy indeed. My fellow friends who watch Russia have been of two minds on whether his decision in October of 1993 to confront the then elected, but really essentially Communist Party operated parliament, was wise. It was a parliament elected by Communist Party with choices, but nevertheless it was a Communist Party parliament. He had to confront that parliament with a use of force. Was a wise decision or not? Now I happen to think that it was a wise decision and a very difficult decision to make. He had through that summer been stymied by 300 changes to the constitution inaugurated by this parliament on a majority vote basis which really made the process of change in which he was engaged extremely difficult. These were changes oriented against him and what he wanted to do. His view was that this parliament did not represent either his interest as president, he had been elected, or popular will, and that in the future that had to shift, so he used force to do it but promised open, follow-on elections. Well he was criticized, including by a number of Americans including some diplomats in the embassy, for having taken that action to use force in a situation where these people who were being replaced had been elected too, but also barricaded themselves in the parliament and collected weapons. He had in turn ring fenced them in with the paramilitary police -- and where they may have fired the opening shots and he fired the final shots. Very few people were killed happily and he did it quite effectively. But the thing that he did which I thought was both risky but probably political necessary to assure international and even domestic support was then to go to elections. Those elections did not produce the result for which he had hoped.

Over that period of time as we watched, it was Yeltsin's pattern to try to be correct, and he was on most things at the critical points, and on other points to use Russian nationalism as a tool for the solidification of the direction toward which he was going. That often made for circumstances which were not necessarily to the U.S.'s interest -- where he would take foreign policy attitudes contrary to the direction in which we thought things should go. Some of those had to do with the Balkans in which the Russians looking toward both their influence in the Balkans and with some concern at what they thought was a western kind of Christian gang-up on the Orthodox Serbs. It was true that the Orthodox Serbs themselves had committed many crimes and blunders -- but as anybody has said over the ex-Yugoslavia which was in the course of shredding at the time, there is blame enough to go around. So he took the view that we collectively ought to defend the Milosevic-Serb regime to the extent that we can -- and certainly not see it forced to knuckle under. They were concerned about preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia and they were concerned about the unhinging of Kosovo, even though they understood at least intrinsically the Serbs had committed many mistakes in dealing with the Albanian Kosovars.

*Q: Well also wasn't there a concern that I mean that you had Chechnya and really many other places and...*

PICKERING: Very much so...

*Q: ...this was sort of a parallel, I mean, one could easily draw the parallel between the...*

PICKERING: It had a parallel kind of analogy lesson for the Russians. I think the initial blunder with respect to Chechnya was that the Russians believed that military force was perhaps the sole, unique and only kind of silver bullet path to take with the Chechens. Chechnya, as you know, was the only one of the 89 Russian second order administrative divisions, the equivalent of our states, that was not dominated by a Russians. They were a minority in Chechnya; it was dominated by split minorities of Muslims, but there was not available a majority vote of ethnic Russians in Chechnya. It had been obstreperous, it had continued to be obstreperous, and it was led by a leader who formerly had been in the Russian air force, but who then adopted an independent path. And the Chechens very clearly, at least a large number of them, wanted to head off on the road toward independence. The Russians said, "Look we just dismembered the Soviet Union, we've given 15 republics their full independence in a blinking of the eye and with large numbers of Russians living in those areas. Now you are going after the Russian Federation, which we have kept solid, whole, independent, unified and at least free in their view."

So here was the first driving of a wedge into the fabric of what the Russians clearly felt it was their right and duty to preserve. So all of these pressures were building up on Yeltsin and he was coming to the election of 1996. It was clear that his popularity -- that he was getting down into single figures and it was clear to him, at least those around him were arguing that a good success, a swift military campaign in Chechnya would make a lot of difference. It was also true that not uniquely in Russia but in some way in terms of their identification, Chechens as a significant and identifiable group in Russian towns, were linked to a mafia or a series of mafias which were running illegal businesses. Perhaps some of this was certainly true; the Chechens found it hard, they were discriminated against within the Soviet Union and later Russia- they found it hard to find jobs. They were not as well educated; they were in the Russian sense "Chorny" (blacks) from the perspective of the fact that many of them had more olive skin color and darker hair and wore moustaches and so were identified by the Russians in these terms. As a result, Yeltsin was persuaded, perhaps by his advisors, that this was a great opportunity to take a whack at them. The Russian Army and its capacities were overestimated and it was seen as potentially a short, sharp, Russian military victory in the offing. This turned out to be very bad because the Russian military was clearly unprepared to take on the Chechens. They had a long history of capability and experience in their history of guerrilla warfare. Stalin was deeply worried about the Chechens since as the Germans approached the Caucasus he thought the Chechens would go over to their side.

*Q: Didn't Tolstoy...*

PICKERING: Tolstoy wrote about a 49 year Tsarist military campaign to contain them in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. So all of this meant that Yeltsin made what I think was probably a classical mistake. It was kind of an 'Iraq mistake', that you

could go in and use your tanks and superior artillery and helicopters and gunships and get ruthless and put them in their place and create a quick victory -- and then like a Hollywood movie everything else -- the politics, the economy would take care of itself. Well his military leaders made some serious mistakes and he got very badly beat up in street fighting. Lots of Russians were badly treated and it turned into a huge bloody conflict with a lot of atrocities on both sides. It had to be worked out politically half way through the Yeltsin period and then, of course, Putin turned around and did the same thing, made a serious mistake, to go after Chechnya again as it became again disaffected. and is still struggling with it now. Finally, he has put in his own Chechen leader, Kadyrov, to run the place.

*Q: Going back to...*

PICKERING: So this added international opposition. But let me bring it to the final point here. All of this meant that at various times and on various issues we would have summit meetings. We would go into the summit meetings with some serious differences with Yeltsin and this increased over a period of time. So I think probably after '96 this got more difficult, but Clinton was remarkably able to deal with Yeltsin; the two of them got along very well, they liked each other. Clinton handled Yeltsin with remarkable care. At the end, Yeltsin would do things like, for example, agreeing at a press conference to something that he had resisted, but working with Clinton on the press handling of this maybe just kind of naturally, maybe without some deeply integrated plan. Yeltsin would come forward and claim this as a kind of new Russian foreign policy victory even though he was ending up doing what it was that we would have liked to see them do in the first place and he originally said he was against. O some modifications were made true. And he was able to carry the country with him on that.

But it was also clear that over a period of time that Andrei Kozyrev who was for quite a time Yeltsin's foreign minister and was a young reformer from the foreign ministry would eventually have to resign He appeared to be much more pliant and compliant in the hands of the west than he was or than I think the facts actually showed. But nevertheless, because he was young and reform oriented and was seen in that guise, he had to go. Yeltsin brought in Yevgeny Maksimovich Primakov who had been renowned as a Russian "press man", intelligence agent of ten in the Middle East under the Soviets, and who at the time was actually in charge of running the Russian foreign intelligence service, the SVR.

*Q: Were we looking at the Soviet, well the Russian army, particularly we are talking about in the Balkans where all of a sudden you have brigades or regiments or something running around doing things where we've seen them as almost an elemental force? How did we see them?*

PICKERING: The Russians ended up in the Balkans nominally as part of the peacekeeping organization. We wanted them there. We wanted to have a notion that we were not locked in tension and opposition over what was going on both in Bosnia and then later in Kosovo. At the time, we organized the Kosovo peacekeeping arrangements and the Russians indicated that they were willing to be part of this under the same sort of terms as they worked in Bosnia, which were interesting. I will talk about those in a minute. But, as you know, the Russians quite unexpectedly launched a race with their peacekeeping unit on the ground to move from Bosnia to Kosovo to control the airport at Pristina before, in fact, we and the other western peacekeepers

could get in. While there was some tension and some scratchiness on the ground, they never ended up holding the airport against us and we never ended up using force. I think it was Mike Jackson, the British general, who quite wisely said, "We are not going to go to war with the Russians over peacekeeping arrangements, let's sit down and work it." We ended up I mean the Russians ended up putting themselves in a trap. They had the airfield briefly, but they couldn't supply themselves and we made it clear to our friends in the Balkans that this was not the time to give the Russian Air Force clearance to bring in supplies for the Russian troops at the Pristina airport. They didn't and the Russians didn't try to force the issue.

It became a test of wills within a constrained situation in which the Russians held the weaker cards in the end. As a result, they had to come back in and play ball. Similarly, throughout that period of time, we were struggling to get Milosevic to behave with respect to Kosovo. Dick Holbrook went out a couple of times. His view was in the end, as it had been in the course of the negotiations to set the stage for Dayton, that we probably had to bomb the Serbs. As you know, we ended up bombing, but we also ended up having Strobe and former Prime Minister Chernomyrdin work with Martti Ahtisaari, a former president of Finland and a former very senior UN official, a former undersecretary general, to help put the thing back together again in a way that essential worked out that there would be a very serious, strong UN peacekeeping presence in Kosovo. Over a period of time we would leave the issues of political settlement for a while. We actually had a conference in France to try to achieve a political settlement, which broke down, and never achieved an end result.

*Q: That was Rombeu...*

PICKERING: Rambouillet, yes.

*Q: Rambouillet conference.*

PICKERING: Conference yes. So that represented another area of tension. But over a period of time with Martti Ahtissari's help and leadership we were able in effect to put things in place. As you know, then subsequently, and this is a story which I think is quite remarkable, the U.S. played certainly a very serious role, but not a forward role, but working particularly with democratic friends throughout the Balkans in setting the stage for an election in Serbia which saw Milosevic and his colleagues out and another, more positive group come in. We were able through an election process in Serbia to see Milosevic himself unseated and replaced by people who were at least more amenable to dealing with the international environment. That still turned out to be hard and within recent years we've once renegotiated Kosovo again with Russian opposition and with some tension over this issue. But generally speaking we've now passed through the worst part of that crisis. We have what is clearly an independent Kosovo still under heavy UN tutelage.

*Q: I was wondering how did we view Russia at the time? Had we moved away from the zero sum game of everything that's bad for the Soviets is good for us?*

PICKERING: No, it is quite fascinating. The Clinton administration which coincided almost within two years of the fall of communism, began to have ideas that Russia could become

democratic, strong, economically stable, politically liberal, a major player on the world scene. That it would obviously also go through some economic disintegration on the road to get there was foreseen. We had ideas about reform in Russia, which were much too millennial, much too forward leaning, much too put it this way out of synch with Russian behavior or indeed to Russian interests. Russia itself, with the collapse of communism, didn't see the end of communism, nor did it see the end of people who had grown up under communism in a very clear way across the broad expanse of the public and among many in the government. It was quite a long while for the Russian to get out of the communist mentality and as a way of responding. Certainly, in the early 1990s, most of the people I dealt with were still old communist bureaucrats who dealt with issues as if the Soviet Union was still alive.

But Russia then went through a very humiliating for Russians set of circumstances. Two things happened. The economy collapsed and there were extreme hardship; reform in their view failed. If they had hopes about it, and they often forgot about all the good benefits they got including free speech and relative freedom from police interference and they got relatively open at least an open electoral process. They remembered all the hardships because those are the things that pinched on family life, on people's ability to do things. You had some rampant development of, what I would call, super capitalists (oligarchs) at the expense of others without much attention paid to values and principles. The values and principles were never incorporated in those early days into the Russian regulatory or legislative system. It was free of restraints; you were free to become a rapacious capitalist if you could be. But it was a messy, terrible period and many people believed that the decade of the '90s represented the depth of humiliation and hardship for Russia and the Russians. Everybody, including the US, was trying to tell the Russians what to do and how to behave. The Russians were the recipients of foreign assistance -- enough to give donors the opportunity to be dictatorial even to the Russians about how they should reform, but not enough actually to accomplish very much.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: So Putin came in and began a process of what I would call over responding to this. He re-centralized, he gained more control over the press, he was enormously benefited by increasing oil prices, and his economy suddenly went from something that was deep in the hole to an economy now as we speak (2008) that has maybe \$600 billion worth of reserves. That was both foreign exchange holdings and stabilization funds coming out of the oil patch -- and a future that looked toward even higher oil prices. An economy that can run its budget well on oil at \$35, an economy that survived on oil at \$20 and an economy that was going to tank on oil at \$10 -- so it gives you some bench marks, but with oil at \$135 or \$120 or whatever it is, it's an economy that is doing very well thank you. (The trick was to turn that higher priced oil into a more diverse, efficient and productive economy across the board -- to unhinge the near total dependence on oil income. That was hardly tried and did not succeed.)

*Q: Well...*

PICKERING: So no longer are they accepting the dictate as they see it. Now in both the US and Russia large numbers of people still look at each other through Cold War lenses. I go around and speak on Russia and take the questions and usually by the beginning of the third question, people

will talk about the ‘Soviet Union this’ and the ‘Soviet Union that’ -- as if it were still there. But you go to Russia and the people still see NATO as if it were the Cold War instrumentality portrayed to them by the communists. NATO was there to strangle Russia, surround Russia and maybe as an instrument for wrecking Russia. Certainly nothing in the Russian mentality seems to equate NATO with the defensive arrangements to deal with what the west felt would become a more rapacious Red Army following the collapse of Germany and the Russian occupation of half of Europe.

*Q: Well did you sense any I won't say tension is not the right word but differences? I'm thinking some of the places of Clinton obviously Madeleine Albright and you being the undersecretary for political affairs and having served in Russia and all was there any divergence in the view of how we deal with this country or not?*

PICKERING: Sure. I think that probably Madeleine Albright through her own background, someone born in Czechoslovakia and had grown up there and later became, of course, a citizen of the U.S., still felt this sense of the Russian occupation of her country of birth and the Soviet style tactics of some of the Russian diplomats which she ran across in her work.

*Q: This is like Zbig Brzezinski too. I mean this hangs on.*

PICKERING: This hangs on and so if anything, Brzezinski has certainly with respect to Russia some elements of what I would call traditional Polish feeling, and Madeleine inherited that deep concern and suspicion about Russians. As a result, that tended to make her much more skeptical, certainly tougher, in dealing with the Russians than others. Strobe's view was a little more -- we have and can do business together, it's important to do that, it's important to work at it. Strobe's major innovation though, which I think is still a very good one, was to look at from the beginning of the Clinton administration at a need to have a positive agenda with Russia. This included the need to build into our relationships a whole series of possibilities for cooperation, not artificially, but based on common views to the extent that we could generate common views on those kinds of things. So we pursued disarmament initiatives, we pursued non-proliferation initiatives, we pursued initiatives to stabilize Europe; we pursued a lot of cooperation with the Russians on developing everything from better health systems in Russia to try to find ways to assist their military in demobilization.

There were a whole lot of things of that sort and that grew quickly into the Gore-Chernomyrdin arrangement. The Gore-Chernomyrdin arrangement had several values. One was that it was an orderly process in which leaders on each side were able to make sure that ministers and ministries who were essential to the success of joint projects cooperated and worked together. We wanted to be sure that they had enough meetings and they did enough basic auditing of the process and oversight of the process so that it worked well. But it gave a positive cast to the relationship so that when we had negative issues to deal with, we also had a positive investment to offset those. As a result it was important to find answers on the negative side not to focus on the negatives and use the negatives as the defining feature of the relationship. This was not a process of ignoring realities, but to the contrary of using a common investment in national interest as a leveraging factor to help solve additional problems as they can along. Or if not solve them, fence them in and follow a path of reducing harm or searching for solutions.

My own view is that this is a process which made a certain amount of sense. We followed it subsequently by osmosis in China. Over the next decade or two certainly, and I've been doing some speaking and writing about this, I think we need to develop this or a similar processes for what I would call the big players in the international community. These in 2008 are certainly China, India, Russia, the European Union, Japan and Brazil. They are not all states. Most have continental reach and therefore are less threatened in their neighborhoods. But it is the institutionalization of our relationship, the identification of common values, the pursuit of a positive agenda and the use of these kinds of activities to help resolve at a high level negative questions when they arise as they inevitably do. Gore and Chernomyrdin were able together, sitting together, to work out some very difficult answers about such questions as the ongoing Russian arms supply to Iran -- results that were quite satisfactory from our point of view. We worked together to remove nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Byelorussia (Belarus) and Kazakhstan. This was a major achievement in that sense. Three countries which inherited nuclear weapons at the collapse of the Soviet Union, including delivery vehicles, were, in effect, as a result of these common U.S.-Russian activities, brought into becoming non-nuclear powers by returning those weapons to Russia.

*Q: Well in a way when we talk about this working on a positive relationship we are talking about the period that you were undersecretary was there anything that was coming out the other way, in other words, what were we doing that we should mend our ways on or something?*

PICKERING: Well I think there were several things. I think that we attempted because of our support in the foreign aid area to be more dictatorial to the Russians than the Russians were prepared to accept. For example, we made an agreement, a perfectly normal agreement, that foreign aid should not be taxed. But somehow the Russians had this absolute fixation that money coming into their country ought to be subject to taxation and the Russians never implemented the deal. It continued to be a festering problem.

But when we went in to begin to provide aid, we had nobody with any experience with Russia in the aid program, almost nobody in the aid program spoke Russian. We had had a very useful set of experiences with foreign assistance in the developing parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia, but those experiences were not easily transferable to Russia. It was a different culture, it was a different mindset, a different attitude toward these kinds of relationships. But we had more of a one-size fits all mindset and it took us a long while to conform more to what the Russians expectations were and to be more successful in our assistance programs. Certainly, we had people over there, everybody from Jeff Sax to Larry Summers, who didn't agree entirely among themselves, advising the Russians on macro-economic policy from time-to-time. Some of it was useful; some of it was not good.

*Q: Well there was this tremendous outflow of think tanks and everyone else sending people with all sort of I won't say gratuitous advice but missionaries wandering all over, I mean it was humiliating really.*

PICKERING: Well the Russians felt it was. I used to see the Russian Orthodox Patriarch because he was a very significant figure in Russia, an interesting gentleman. He grew up in Estonia from

a German family origin and interestingly enough emerged as the Patriarch of Moscow. His deep concern was that while the church remained the most popular body in Russia by far even after all the persecution of the Soviet Union, probably because of it, he suddenly felt that he was then in a position under Yeltsin and the reforms to regain the status and indeed control over church property. He began again retraining his hierarchy and the rebuilding of it. Then all of a sudden people who looked to him like Billy Graham were emerging with large amounts of money with large abilities to approach people through TV and large stadium meetings and a lot of evangelism. Some of that caught on in Russia, because the Russians had been so deprived in this area for so long, that they were turning in many different directions. So he said, "I have a chance to regain the role of traditional Orthodoxy in Russia, particularly with respect to the public, and then suddenly all these other poachers are coming in and stealing my flocks. I have no wealth to counteract that and I have to turn to the Russian government. I don't particularly like that, but they are the one mainstay I can count on. I have to begin to try to hold things together through what has been an entirely unexpected and from my point of view egregious interference in our religious affairs in Russia."

*Q: You know looking at this from the outside I almost feel that Russia will never pose a threat as long as the Ukraine is out of the equation. It's just too big and powerful an area. How did we feel about the Ukraine?*

PICKERING: Well throughout we've had I suspect overwhelming attraction for the idea of an independent Ukraine. The Ukrainians from our perspective speak differently; there is a large Ukrainian presence in this country. Most of those are western Ukrainians and so they are what one would call true Ukrainian speakers and nationalists. Some of them or a lot of them are Uniates in religion, that is they are in an Orthodox church in liturgy and practice, which has allegiances to Rome, to the Roman Catholic Church. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Roman Catholic Church developed churches in the Middle East and Eastern Europe which were not liturgically traditional Roman Catholic Churches. They were liturgically very similar to the local churches. But they owed allegiances to Rome and followed the practices of local churches. So western Ukraine is heavily influenced and populated by people who call themselves Greek Catholics, but who are, in effect, members of a Uniate Church which uses traditional Orthodox liturgy and traditional Orthodox forms of organization, including married priests and celibate bishops.

*Q: Where priests can marry and all that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Yes, to be a Bishop you have to be a monastic, and this is traditional throughout Orthodoxy. Priests can marry and almost universally do marry. Ukraine is split up in religious affiliation, particularly in eastern Ukraine where there is a large Russian speaking population. It is in effect a Russian ethnic population. There is allegiance in their main church to the Moscow Patriarch. There is also a Ukrainian Nationalist Church and Patriarch in Kiev and apparently I'm told there is at least one schismatic branch of that church. So religiously Ukraine is quite divided.

So you have this, but not all Ukrainians are anti-Russian and not all Russians are imperialists about the Ukraine, although for the Russians it is easier to feel sentimentally attached to Ukraine as a part of Russia than it is for Ukrainian nationalists to understand or indeed accept the notion that Russia should have any role in Kiev.



*Q: Did we have any feeling toward when you were there was the Ukraine an issue of trying to support it or seeing it sort of as a countermeasure to Russia at all?*

PICKERING: No, but there were deep Russian concerns with NATO enlargement, that it would be carried into Ukraine; but that was not where it was back in the '90s. It was basically those states were in the past nominally members of the Warsaw Pact and now not part of the Soviet Union. The three Baltic Republics were a bit different for us. We all believed they never should have been part of the Soviet Union and we never recognized them as part of the Soviet Union, we made a distinction there. The Russians didn't like it, they were very concerned as they suddenly saw NATO, which they saw as an aggressive military force surrounding them, creeping up to their border. As you know, during this period the Russians believed we made commitments that there were to be no nuclear weapons in this area, there would be no stationed forces of the United States or allies in this area and there would be severe limitations on conventional forces through the European treaty on that issue. The treaty limitations on forces would be on both sides. We tried to reassure each other that deployments of conventional forces would be limited, particularly in the flank regions.

Of course that treaty has now come under attack by the Russians and they have said they have pulled out with respect to certain flank limitations on armor and artillery forces and things of that sort. Ukraine was not seen then as an objective of NATO enlargement; it has become such now and, of course, Ukraine is split politically. There are at least two Ukrainian nationalist elements, one led by Yulia Tymoshenko and the other by Yushchenko, and there is another, Yanukovich, who is the pro-Russian, who represents a lot of these Russian speaking residents in eastern Ukraine. The Ukraine itself is not monolithic about these issues, but the Russian's consider this extremely sensitive. It would be a little bit like, for example, the Warsaw Pact suddenly extending itself not just to Cuba but maybe Northern Mexico from our perspective. I think we have less of an understanding of that perspective than we should. We are fond of saying well, the Ukrainians are independent they should be free to choose their own role and they should be free to choose to join a defensive alliance if that is what they want to do; all in my view perfectly legitimate although it raises enormous questions and tensions and difficulties. The Ukrainians at home are apparently split in their views about joining NATO. (2008 apparently there was not a majority in Ukraine that wanted to join NATO. After 2013-15, that may well have shifted.)

*Q: Where did you find I don't think we've talked about this but about NATO and the expansion of NATO? This is you were...*

PICKERING: This was when I was ambassador to Russia and I think talked about it extensively.

*Q: Oh yes, that was when you were ambassador to Russia. So was this at all...was NATO expansion at all an issue when you were undersecretary?*

PICKERING: Nope, there were some lingering aspects of it, but most of it had been settled down. There were some aspects about should we provide modern American fighter aircraft to be deployed in and around the Baltic States where the Russians found this offensive?

*Q: You kind of wonder what's the point?*

PICKERING: Well I mean the Balts complained that the Russians were over flying them and to some extent they may have been. But there were continued such flights, at least the Balts believed there were. When I was in Russia it happened. I'm sure they continued after I left Russia when Jim Collins and then later Sandy Vershbow went there. There were always tensions over border issues, over ethnic issues with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania with Russia; mainly with Estonia, which was the furthest east, if you put it geographically.

*Q: Well back to the Slavic business. On Macedonia one of the big things was not Macedonia but Kosovo and all. Did the sort of increase Milosevic inspired Serbian oppression and persecution of the Kosovars sort of hit us by surprise? How did sort of the debate of what the hell are we going to do about this come about?*

PICKERING: No it...well it wasn't by surprise, all of us predicted or had been predicting that Kosovo would become a serious problem. It certainly did become a serious problem, in part because the Serbs were oppressive, in part because the Albanians gained access to military equipment and training. So we had what was then a running guerrilla war with very serious and quite massive Serbian oppression. The international community with our lead stepped in and said this can't continue and, as you know, got the Serbs out of most of Kosovo except for the Mitrovica area in the north which is a Serbian populated area. We helped to put in a UN peacekeeping force to try to keep order.

*Q: Well what about the bombing of Belgrade and all that was that at all a disagreement?*

PICKERING: Well that was part of the effort to bring pressure on Milosevic to accede to taking his people out of Kosovo and accepting the UN arrangements.

*Q: It seems like it was sort of a bombing thing without trying to make too many victims.*

PICKERING: Well we were trying to be exquisitely careful about what we were doing because we knew that the penalty for civilian casualties would be undermining of the political effect of this use of force that we were in effect sponsoring and advocating as a way to bring Milosevic around to an agreement.

*Q: Was there any debate about...at one time we were making a big thing about would we insert I can't think of the name but a special type of attack helicopters.*

PICKERING: Apaches.

*Q: Apaches helicopters and all that?*

PICKERING: Would we use Apaches? Yes there was a debate.

*Q: Which struck me particularly knowing what the Serb military had probably wouldn't have been as affective as we were touting in that terrain or should we go toward cutting off the power and not knocking down the bridges and all that? Was there at all a debate that got to your...*

PICKERING: It was a very serious debate. State was not a major participant in it but it was a very serious debate, particularly with Wes Clark who was then NATO chief and also U.S. chief in Europe and who was responsible for the military aspects. The feeling was that Wes was very much in favor of using the Apaches; he felt that they had a major role to play. One of the key issues was that Apaches are normally deployed with multiple rocket launchers which we had developed to be quite accurate so we could use those to suppress fires, anti-aircraft and missile bases designed to attack the helicopters. We used those to protect the helicopters from anti-aircraft fire. Apparently, that was not going to be possible for some reason, I don't know why -- whether we didn't want to deploy those into Albania. But we actually moved Apaches to Albania for a while but never used them in the Kosovo area.

In the meantime, most of our bombing in Belgrade was carried out with American forces, which then had the J-Dam, which was a GPS controlled bomb so that we could be accurate. Later, I visited Belgrade and the bomb damage hadn't been cleaned up even by 2004 when I went. You saw the intelligence and police headquarters where bombs had gone in the sides of buildings leaving big round holes and on the inside was all destroyed. So the people who got hit were people who worked mainly for the Serbian government. I think we went after the TV station because of its propaganda role, but the rest of the time we tried to go after military installations, headquarters and buildings. Now, you know, the famous incident of the Chinese embassy and, of course, one of the things I did, as under secretary, was to go to China at the president's request to explain to them exactly how this had happened.

*Q: I want to talk about this whole oriental/Asian thing at another time. But how about as we were dealing with Yugoslavia and all what was the role of the Greeks at that time? I'm speaking as someone who served five years in Belgrade and four years in Athens.*

PICKERING: Well you obviously know that there were at least the sense of tight connections. That if you'd looked at the Serbs and you said where would they find their friends? They would find their friends principally in the Orthodox world. So while the Serbian Church was autocephalous -- independent -- it was amazing how these connections played a role. It was the Greek patriarch in Constantinople and the Greeks themselves as traditional leaders in Christian Orthodoxy who had this relationship with the Serbs. They basically shared their common Orthodox faith. This played a role. I think that this role was maybe enhanced as well by things like money and contacts over a period of time. But as you might remember, when we deployed military forces for the peacekeeping through Thessaloniki, it was quite a chore for the Greeks to make sure that it went off without a lot of interference and without a lot of objection. I can remember, I think my wife went to visit my sister who lived in Greece at that time, and she said that Greece was full of anti-western, anti-NATO, anti-U.S. signs. Absolutely no evidence that the Greeks themselves felt strongly about it, but whoever was writing signs and agitating, I suppose Greek parties to the left were very, very fierce about it. Sufficiently so that they had an influence on the Greek government. They found it difficult, dragged their feet on the deployment, and found it hard to go along. Although, we actually did move a very large Marine contingent

through Thessaloniki up into Macedonia for a while as, at least, a temporary deployment and Macedonia was always an issue with the Greeks over the name, as you know.

*Q: Still is.*

PICKERING: Still is, yes.

*Q: It seems like its one of these artificial things but people...we have it in our own elections I can't think of some but there are issues which don't stir anybody else but they stir us; Cuba for example.*

PICKERING: Cuba does, yes and we have never moved the embassy to Jerusalem where both sides in the US outdo themselves in supporting that goal before the elections, but generally forget once they get elected.

*Q: Every primary season we move the embassy to Jerusalem and all of a sudden it becomes....*

Well I'm thinking Tom that this is probably a good place to stop.

PICKERING: OK.

*Q: I don't think we've talked about the Middle East.*

PICKERING: Not much at least, there is Iraq going on and all that.

*Q: You know the Middle East nothing happens there much but we might find something to talk about. Then obviously Africa, Latin America and then Asia.*

PICKERING: East Asia.

*Q: Yeah, great.*

*Q: OK, today is the 17th of June 2008. Tom let's talk about how would you describe the situation in your favorite spot the Middle East when you became under secretary?*

PICKERING: Well I'm just trying to think. Iraq was beginning to present some serious problems because efforts that had been put together in 1991 and 1992 regarding UN inspections were coming under real pressure. The oil for food process had been set up, but was not really yet being implemented in any serious way. Pressure was building among humanitarian groups that the sanctions were only punishing poor Iraqi innocent civilians rather than the regime itself. France, Russia and China were beginning to look at a new way of dealing with Iraq, including perhaps finding a way eventually of taking off sanctions all together.

*Q: Did you have a feeling that France, China, Russia and Germany were also playing games, you know, at least some of the companies were circumventing the...*

PICKERING: I think there was some of that. There was clear throughout the period, as life went on after April 1997, efforts on Saddam's part were made to move oil contracts in their direction - - once we got sort of engaged in oil for food following a negotiation at the UN with the Iraqis on the modalities for running the program. There were clearly interests in France, large-scale Iraqi debts a lot of it from military equipment sent during the war with Iran, and ditto with Russia -- numbers like \$7 billion. So the Russians had some real monetary interest in regularizing relations with Iraq and it was at a time when the Russian economic situation went close to the nadir in August 1988, when the ruble collapsed. So there were serious pressing interests on their part. The Chinese were anti-interventionist, fearing that such an action might be turned on them by others. They didn't want to sanction anyone, or support much intervention in the Security Council. The Security Council became a kind of center piece of this activity with the growing, what one would call encouragement of Saddam, to believe that if he hadn't already, and he hadn't split the Security Council in votes, it might be coming along fairly soon -- that such would happen. That would encourage him to believe that he was then on the path to get out from under the Security Council sanctions and American pressures and other things. To do this he had to behave himself. There was at that point no real resolution of the weapons of mass destruction issue. So rather than describing what happened afterward that is sort of a snap shot of Iraq.

The snapshot on the Arab-Israeli peace process was that it was kind of moving along. I forget all the exact timing of this, I followed it less closely, but there was no question at all that over this period of time the administration would be persuaded that it could undertake initiatives between Israel and Syria at Shepherdstown. There were things that then later led to a major effort near the end of the presidency, by the president at Wye in Maryland, to see whether we could find an answer before the end of the administration to all the problems that had bedeviled Arab-Israeli peace. In the meantime, there were periods of calm in the relationships and there were some offline conversations going on, some of which we knew about and some of which we didn't know about until late -- at Oslo in fact, whether through these kinds of direct conversations through what one would have to call empowered but not official representatives, Arabs and Israeli's, could put on paper how they would shape a peace settlement.

Iran remained a difficult problem for the U.S. Nevertheless the administration had hoped particularly with the election of President Khatami that there might be an opening for conversations. Certainly the administration was ready for direct conversations with Iran. They, however, were not successful in persuading Iran that this was a good thing to do and this was the right time to do it.

*Q: On the Iran-American question where was the problem coming from? I think for a long time we'd been ready to deal, did we feel this was particularly the Mullahs or particularly a group of the Mullahs who were in control who just didn't want to see this because this was their main way of staying in power?*

PICKERING: I don't know that anti-Americanism remained for them the key to remaining in power. I think that's probably too glib and too pat an answer. Whether it played any role or not I don't know. My experience subsequently, in 2002 and later in 2004, when I went to Iran as a tourist was that the Iranian public was pro-American because it was anti-Mullah -- and they saw the Americans as being anti-Mullah. But that again was not the answer. The Iranians may have

had internal difficulties. There might have been enough of a reserve on reaching out on the part of the Khamenei, the Supreme Leader because the various factions hadn't settled down. The Khatami victory which came later and which seemed potentially to open the door from the perspective of the United States to what one would call a more convivial and open relationship with the United States including the possibility of talks was in itself perceived maybe as dangerous to the government. Therefore, they wanted to be careful about how they actually encouraged contacts and talks -- all of those kinds of things.

In the early days in the first Bush administration it was clear that one of the principal problems the Iranians had in talking to the United States seemed to be that they wanted the talks to be absolutely confidential, totally sealed, not a word would pass anybody's lips that they were taking place. It was very clear in those days that there was no way the United States could guarantee such secrecy -- the United States would have to, if asked directly in Congress, say the talks were taking place -- something along the lines of admitting that they were taking place. However, that would be carefully phrased and the Iranians were never prepared to subject themselves to that kind of limited exposure. So there were clearly, in the early '90s, some critical questions on the Iranian side, about how much they wanted to be seen talking to the Americans, how "capitulationist" they wanted to appear to their opposition. Some of this, I think, was also aggravated by the notion that in the '80s the United States, particularly near the end of the war, had supported Iraq covertly and then semi-overtly as a way of "containing the Iranian nemesis" -- as a way to try to counterbalance it. So it will be the subject of a lot of important PhD. theses and maybe some good books some day as to what were the motivations -- the collective and, indeed, maybe the conflicting motivations inside Iran about this issue. We had similar issues in the United States where some groups, more conservative groups, felt that not only was it important to eliminate Saddam Hussein as the controller of his regime but maybe regime change in Iran was also the appropriate answer.

You will remember there was a kind of dual containment policy in the early stages of the Clinton administration. After looking at this which was, I think, a way of dumbing down what we could accomplish, dodging a bullet or worse, rather than necessarily going for the best in terms in our policy alternatives. What was very clear in the second Clinton administration, even against the backdrop of dual containment, was that we were very much prepared to open conversations and actually took some initiatives to do so.

*Q: There must have been all sorts of conversations going on at the Geneva airport or something of that nature weren't there I mean the lines of communication weren't...*

PICKERING: No I think they were pretty frozen.

*Q: Really?*

PICKERING: Yes. In those days we had come up with the notion with respect to activities in Afghanistan, and this came later, that we would create and use a UN framework that would help us have contact with Iran, something called the Six Plus Two talks on Afghanistan. They involved the U.S. and the Russians and the neighbors of Afghanistan among whom was interestingly enough Iran. I remember going to a meeting later in the administration with

Madeleine Albright at the UN where we expected that the Iranian foreign minister would show up. None of us knew quite what he looked like so we weren't sure when people showed up who exactly was there and we had to run around and ask. Madeleine was very disturbed at having put herself out to come and she was stood up by the Iranian foreign minister, even if, in fact, we were only talking past each other in the conversations.

Secretary Powell in pursuit of the Six Plus Two actually had the opportunity probably to have a few words with the Iranian foreign minister and maybe even shake hands in the quiet composure and confidentiality of the UN meetings -- at Sharm el Sheikh in the Sinai, in Egypt. But these were all difficult and to say there were wide ranging or even a lot of unofficial conversations, I don't think was the case. The Iranians had given their diplomats strict orders not to talk to Americans.

*Q: Did you feel, going back to Iraq, that Hussein was playing an ongoing game and say the UN and all or was this happening beyond his reach?*

PICKERING: Oh no, everybody believed that anything that happened in Iraq was his doing since it was under his total control so that there wasn't anybody else. There was a contending view that was developing rapidly, particularly in the Congress, that we ought to find a way to replace Saddam. As you remember, there was a joint resolution, I think perhaps in '98 that said regime change would be the U.S. policy. The administration was not overjoyed with having it, but decided that it was not something that was not worth fighting and so it kind of relaxed and enjoyed it or at least relaxed and accepted it. Frank Ricciardone by about '98 or '99 was appointed as the U.S. official representative to the combined Iraqi opposition groups. They had been amalgamating in London; I remember going to one meeting with them in New York where there was a convention of these groups. We all had an opportunity to speak about how unspeakable Saddam was and how important it was that these groups get together and unite their efforts. I also remember, I suspect it was in '96, but I'm not sure, where the agency had attempted to activate something that we could certainly call a coup, or at least build a network for that purpose over a period of time. It was rolled up almost completely in '96, by Saddam Hussein and brutally rolled up. There was extreme what one would call sticker shock over the degree to which it was almost impossible reliably to penetrate Iraq with intelligence sources and keep them basically safe from being destroyed -- when he wanted to, by Saddam.

*Q: Were we getting reports or any information out of Iraq about the menace of Saddam? This, of course, became very important later.*

PICKERING: Well that was all understood, because don't forget we had fought a war to expel him from Kuwait. He had invaded Kuwait from our perspective seemingly unprovoked. So I mean he was well known and the situation in Iraq was followed carefully. We had as a result by the end of the war thought we had confined him -- thought we had put into place an inspection mechanism, thought we had laid on his back a number of burdens that he was only partially complying with. It took a while to discover that over a period of time he had destroyed at least some if not all of his nuclear and other mass destruction weapons capability. Later it was clear that all of the nuclear equipment and material had been destroyed. We didn't actually know how much but between say '91 and '97 -- some of that had become known to UNSCOM and later to

our unilateral effort when we occupied Iraq in 2003. We had made serious efforts to find out what was going on inside Iraq; I think with mixed results. We had attempted to use, as others had, the unilateral intelligence we had developed on Iraq to give UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) pointers as to where to look in Iraq to help to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction. In October '98, where after an entire year of negotiations, I spent some time involved in that traveling both to London, Paris and to New York to negotiate with other members of the permanent five a new inspection mechanism. The effort was improve inspection mechanism for UNSCOM to be called UNMOVIC (United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission) -- Hans Blix from Sweden was brought in eventually to chair. France, Russia and China split with us in the Security Council which as I have noted set the cat among the pigeons and Saddam started backing away from compliance.

On the vote on that particular issue, France, Russia and China abstained even though they had approved the resolution and helped us negotiate it; we spent all the time watering it down in order to bring them on board. Then suddenly almost with no prior warning they abstained. Madeleine Albright who had just come from the UN and spent all of her time trying to keep these three in line and I knew what this was involved in it. We were shocked that Bill Richardson let the vote go ahead even with the anticipation, as I understood it, they were going to abstain.

That encouraged Saddam at a critical time to believe that he had now split the Security Council. Then as the new inspection mechanism wished to inspect more places, including what he considered to be very sensitive presidential palaces and things of that sort, he began to put roadblocks in place. We had crises at the UN and we had to muscle a lot of efforts to move the inspections ahead. At one point, Kofi Annan actually went to Baghdad to negotiate with Saddam some way of dealing with these problems which from the point of view of the United States was at least minimally acceptable; it was better than splitting with Kofi and the rest of the UN over this issue, but increasingly it looked as if things were eroding in Iraq rather than getting better for us. This was taking place even while Saddam had probably already by that time, or nearly so, destroyed most of his own capability, but let no one know it.

*Q: I would have thought that particularly the nuclear thing was always the most sensitive point. I would think that in essentially a flat, desert type country like Iraq the fact that we could over fly the place that it would be pretty apparent that there would be no major nuclear thing going on?*

PICKERING: Well I think that's a little too easy to say. I was a photo interpreter and I used to look at the photography of Iraq over the years, but Iraq had built many installations some of them very large with some very large buildings; some of them apparently devoted to biological warfare, some to chemical warfare, some to nuclear. As good as photography is, you don't know always know what is going on inside a big building. We had no knowledge, in fact, about much of that. Iraq is not devoid of hills at all so there are lots of places that he did bury stuff and dig tunnels; but we missed a lot. I think we only picked up on some places long after we got there and were able to run around and see everything from the ground.

*Q: You spent months before...*

PICKERING: Months and months...



*Q: Before we finally....*

PICKERING: Figuring out what it was so I think that was the case. What was true was that the combination of UN inspections and our own reporting and from our allies indicated that it was very difficult for us to be assertive in maintaining that he had developed or was in the course of developing, in a time certain, a nuclear capability. What was certain was that he had used chemical weapons against his own people and against the Iranians in the eight-year war against Iran at Halabja. What we were not sure of was to what degree he had been able to produce stable, lasting, durable chemical weapons; apparently he was not at the end of the day from subsequent information able to accomplish that. We know that he spent a lot of money and obtained a lot of material with which to develop biological weapons, but we were not certain as to the degree of success or failure in that venture. We had in a sense, on his ledger, one large minus in chemicals and two uncertainties in nuclear and biological, with the nuclear uncertainty probably more critical but more uncertain than the biological. There were large amounts of what people called biological media, the culture in which weapons developed, that had been obtained and that had never been able to be tracked as its exact disposition. That remained uncertain in the period, say between '97 and 2000, when I left government.

*Q: Did you feel I mean was there a palpable group within Congress and outside which later maybe at that time dubbed the neocons were out to go into Iraq no matter what? Was this a force? We're talking about as under secretary was from '91 to...*

PICKERING: Me?

*Q: Yes.*

PICKERING: No, '97-2000.

*Q: '97 to 2000.*

PICKERING: No, there were people who didn't like Iraq on both sides of the ledger certainly Richard Perle was among them, but it was not seen basically as a committed movement. Paul Wolfowitz spoke out against them, a number of them were particularly active in encouraging this resolution on regime change, which was only advisory it wasn't binding. But after which there was provided for \$100 million authority for the Defense Department to implement the activity. The Defense Department said it didn't have that \$100 million ready to hand. It could provide surplus desks for the Iranian Liberalization Movement and a few things like that, but it was never really anything that was seriously carried out. Frank Ricciardone's task was to keep them all together but to do it with surplus desks wasn't truly what the Iraqi's who were in the liberation movements and they ran everything, from the monarchists to the communists, were really interested in having.

*Q: What were your old stamping groups in Jordan? Where was Jordan in this?*

PICKERING: Well Jordan had become in the period of the '80s, beginning even before I left there in the '70s when they had been very close to Syria, they had then moved and became very close to Iraq. They were in a sense the pipeline for imported military equipment and support to Iraq during the war with Iran. The Iranian presence in the Gulf made it very hard for the Iraqi's to use the Gulf waterway as a sustainable pipeline. Aqaba got very busy, the Jordanian port at the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea. Many Jordanians did very well in shipping things to Iraq. Jordan was taken care of, if I can put it that way, through shipments of Iraqi oil which had to come out by truck to Jordan. It provided for Jordan's ability to maintain its demand need for hydrocarbons, not large by any scale. But since Jordan had none, it was very important to it. They got their oil from Iraq by truck delivery. Over the years, we had sought to convince the Saudi's that they should provide this oil, but they hadn't. They had an unused pipeline going up to Tripoli in Lebanon that went through Jordan that could have been used and indeed over the years was used when it was active to provide Jordan with crude oil for its refinery. That never happened.

*Q: Was that a tap line?*

PICKERING: The Tapline, yeas. Then over the years, a number of Iraqi's moved to Jordan. I suspect that the Iraqi intelligence services were very happy to provide funding and other things to build friendships and alliances and relationships in Jordan. Jordan had this Iraqi orientation. At the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, King Hussein was reluctant to commit himself against Iraq, He thought that there ought to be a diplomatic solution to the problem, worked in his view very hard to achieve it, and felt that he was ignored and over ridden by the United States in its haste to marshal forces against Iraq. Jordan went through a kind of political downer with the United States as a result of that. King Hussein had contacted me at the UN and I expressed real skepticism that Saddam was going to negotiate and told King Hussein that if the effort was to get us to slow down and hesitate in building up forces in the region it would have no traction with the US. The Saudis were very concerned because their northern border was almost undefended in the face of some 40 plus Iraqi divisions in Kuwait in August 1990

*Q: I had an interview with Roger Harrison who was our ambassador there and talks about how he had to ignore an awful lot of his instructions he received, I mean they were just...*

PICKERING: Oh yes and I'm sure Roger would know this in chapter and verse. I watched it from a distance at the time first at the UN and then later I went on to India. But there was no question that over the years, Jordan was attempting to build back its relationship with the United States. While Jordan wasn't a very active participant in the first Gulf War for all those obvious reasons, by the time of the late '90s we had become concerned about stability in Jordan. King Hussein died, young King Abdullah had come on; this was a transition and not an easy one for Jordanians. The question of what the role of the Palestinians would play in Jordan also was becoming increasingly important. Jordan was kind of stretched between Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Israel in ways that made it very difficult for it to finally settle out where it was going. But over a period of time, King Abdullah became more convinced that the United States would be serious in helping him and not seeing him go under and support Jordan where it was going.

Subsequently the Jordanians were quietly very helpful to the United States in helping with Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003 and have emerged a little closer and a little bit more benefited from their perspective by their relationship with the United States. They also signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

*Q: You mentioned Israel, Syria and negotiations and all. That's a theme that's been played sixty years or something like that. During your time was there any real room to do anything to get Syria...*

PICKERING: Oh yes, there were real conversations with Syria. They got quite far down the road, but they had some distance to go, and the critical problems were the ones that remained in 2008 the Syrians and the Israeli's with the benefit of help from the Turks were talking about the same sets of problems. There was no question at all that the Syrians wanted a complete evacuation of the Golan. The Israeli's wanted full control of Lake Tiberius, the Sea of Galilee. The Israeli's wanted assurances of water, there would have to be demilitarization of the Golan and some kind of international supervision. But water and territory remained the two big issues for both sides in dealing with the question. The territory related to Israeli's long-standing concern that the strategic heights would continue to dominate their own territory in the Jordan Valley and beyond north of the Sea of Galilee. And on water, the Israeli's wanted to have no possibility of interruption of the flow of water from Syria and Lebanon to the Jordan River system above the Sea of Galilee or out of that lake into their national water system. Assad wanted to have some control over coast line in the Sea of Galilee. The British has arranged with the French in 1920 something like the UK would control a ten meter strip on the Syria side of the lake back from the high water mark. The Israelis insisted they were the successors to the arrangements made in that deal. No one really knows where that high water mark actually was, and of course is now.

*Q: Were the Syrians doing anything water wise?*

PICKERING: The Syrians had before the Israeli's occupied the Golan in '67 made efforts to try to cut water flowing out of their springs below the Golan into the Jordan River and maybe even pump it up or divert it away from Israel. So there were histories of such activities.

*Q: With Israel how stood things there?*

PICKERING: Well I'm trying to think now what was going on. I didn't follow all of the various bits and pieces and I'm trying to think that for a while, Shamir, for a while, Netanyahu, for a while, certainly Rabin, were all in charge. Rabin probably had the best chance of moving until he was assassinated by I think it was in November of '94, and then things shut down. The Israeli's had an enormous amount of trust in Rabin because of his former military position and his reputation as a tough guy in dealing with the Arabs. It was interesting because over the years Rabin and Peres had always contested for leadership. They always lived with daggers drawn, although when Rabin became prime minister, I think Peres then became foreign minister and in terms of ideas for dealing with the peace settlement they cooperated more in that period of time than perhaps in any other. It was a tragedy obviously that Rabin was lost from the scene; he

probably could have accomplished a great deal which is unfortunately probably why he was killed. We were seeing some of the aftermath of that in '97 and '98.

*Q: It's been said that with George Bush, Sr., that when he clamped down on guaranteed loans or something to settlements this had a real effect on a very close election. I don't know but, I mean, was this sort of a lesson that the Clinton administration was very aware of...we are talking about settlements?*

PICKERING: I think that the Clinton administration certainly paid attention to that, but the analysis of why Bush, Sr. lost the election has a great deal more to do maybe with the contending personalities and popularity. After all George Bush came out of the Kuwait War with 80 percent popularity; some of that ran down, some of it was taxes I suspect, some of it may have had to do with the fight with the Israeli's over loan guarantees. But he was able to bring them to Madrid to start the process and that moved ahead. I am not sure it left lasting scars even though it was hard to convince the Israeli right that negotiations were the proper move. He did get Shamir to go to Madrid.

This left some tension in the relationship, some difficulty particularly with the Israeli hard right that was not necessarily widely shared in the American community then. Settlements were as always perhaps the most difficult issue, one of the let me put it this way one of the most doctrinally difficult problems to deal with the Israeli's. There was a long feeling among Zionists of a more conservative view that they should go out and settle all this land, even if they had to move Palestinians off it. Doing that should not be a barrier. They had legal mechanisms which they employed to do so, despite the fact that others might disagree with the validity of the methods. While I think the large majority of Israeli's thought that OK they had to live with these people and they wouldn't go to war with them to prevent this, it was not from their point of view something that related to Israel's existential position in the world.

*Q: How did you feel that the team that was dealing with Israeli-Arab-Palestinian negotiations? Was it sort of it sort of Dennis Ross who was leading this?*

PICKERING: Yes, Dennis and Aaron Miller and others. I thought that under the circumstances they were doing a good job. It was clearly something that Madeleine Albright wanted to be intimately involved in. I arranged that rather than try to play in that obviously closed and difficult area, there were other things to do, Dennis would come by once every couple weeks, sometimes once a month, and we would sit and talk for an hour or two. I stayed up with basically where things were going. If I had any thoughts or suggestions I passed them on to Dennis. That was certainly Madeleine's preference. Dennis had a lot of very difficult questions to deal with but he got out to the area frequently, established good relations, and attempted to build credibility for the United States. There were always questions about how far he should go and in which direction. Over time the president got much more interested in the issue and played a very active role in the last months of the administration.

The tragedies were, one (at a much later time), the loss of Rabin, a serious setback. Secondly, maybe some delays in trying to come to grips with the issue. Real uncertainties on the part of Arafat as to where he wanted to take things and what he would agree with. He was always a

difficult customer to deal with and an even more difficult one with whom to nail things down. Barak also had a potential to shift his position and did. Then perhaps at the end and, I think, maybe Dennis is among those who would certainly recognize this, we got into a situation where we were trying to beat the clock and it wasn't easy. The other players, Arabs especially, felt that if they could use the clock they could hold us off. They tended to maximize minimal issues in order to try and do that and finally even when we had gotten a deal that was reasonably saleable, we hadn't spent enough time with the influential Arabs outside the direct peace process, the Saudi's and the Egyptians. They were obviously close to it and were a key to bringing Arafat along. But we hadn't spent enough time with them to be able to rely on them to weigh in with Arafat and with the Palestinians. But even more they would have to back Arafat and support him and provide the wherewithal to make all that happened. So there were missing pieces that maybe because of the size of the team involved and the ramified and difficult nature of the efforts, these other pieces were not nailed down. Certainly, not in a way that could have helped in the end in making Arafat's decision other than what it was.

It is also true, and I haven't read the details that at various times Barak would come in -- the then Israeli prime minister -- and be forthcoming and then have his own anguish about what it was he could do and maybe not continue on with the proposals he had agreed with.

*Q: OK well Tom, I'm looking at time and I know at 9:30 we've got to quit.*

PICKERING: I mean I can go on until this call comes in if you have a few more minutes.

*Q: OK I can stay. Well Tom as former ambassador to both Israel and Jordan and somebody who knew the area I think it would be kind of hard for you to stay out of the process.*

PICKERING: Well I didn't stay out of it entirely, but I thought that the best way to work was to try to work with Dennis and with his folks and share with him my thoughts and reactions to where things were going and what was happening.

*Q: What was your reading of Arafat?*

PICKERING: Well I didn't know him well; I met him on one or two occasions. Over the period of years I had found him a remarkable survivor under very difficult circumstances. A person who managed to figure out and find ways generally to appeal to Palestinian interests, someone who wouldn't cave from taking difficult stands vis-à-vis the United States, including participating in the murder of American diplomats. He, nevertheless, was clearly the popular choice. He used a great deal of what I would call Middle Eastern guile and corruption to stay where he was. One had to admire that if not his ability to avoid making serious decisions at critical times.

There is a famous phrase that he never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity and someone once gave Abba Eban credit from that. I think I first heard it from Prime Minister Zaid al-Rifai of Jordan, but whoever it was who coined the phrase, probably was pretty apt in doing so. Neither the Jordanians nor the Israeli's liked Arafat very much. The Jordanians because of Black September and what they felt was his effort to try to submerge and overthrow the

Hashemite regime. The Israeli's for all the obvious reasons that he represented basically a kind of in their view devil incarnate in charge of, if anyone was, the Palestinian cause.

*Q: I understand that at least it was mentioned in papers that President Clinton told Bush, Jr. having just been burned by Arafat or at least perceived at the Wye negotiations sort of you can't trust the bastard, you can't deal with him, or something which at least may have lead to Bush sort of avoiding the whole thing for a long time and you know whatever momentum is going...*

PICKERING: Well I think that is right. Even more Clinton's failure to pull off something at the end of his administration with his deep personal involvement was a real disappointment. The inability of the Clinton administration to be able to deal effectively with the Middle East peace process at the end was something that the Republicans found it opportune to raise in the campaign. But it also later made it very hard for Bush to deal with. Bush was then clearly diverted by 9/11 and so even if he had wanted to, he didn't. There was a supposition I think, wrongly that somehow if you didn't pay attention to the Middle East, the parties would go away, think about it and come back much more malleable. The truth was the Middle East, which we all see like the bicycle, if you are not riding forward -- and if the U.S. isn't helping to maintain that momentum it's falling down. To some extent it's a tar baby issue for the United States, very hard to get rid of and once you get rid of it there is no momentum and as a result it gets worse and comes back to stick to you again. We have seen that with a vengeance over the last seven or eight years.

*Q: What about did you get involved at all with the Egyptian relationship and the Saudi relationship or these other players who weren't let's say carrying their weight or used?*

PICKERING: I saw Egyptians and talked to them and Saudi's not primarily in the context of the peace process. We did but I think that in the end when we made the final push it was difficult for us to engage them as adequately as we should have. I can remember back in the days after the Ramadan-Yom Kippur War when Henry Kissinger was trying to set up his one time only meeting in Geneva...

*Q: This was in '73?*

PICKERING: This was in '73 and '74. Something I learned from him -- he practically never let a week go by and in some cases never a day go by -- without communicating with various players in the Middle East. It was often by letter in which people like Roy Atherton and Joe Cisco and their staffs were regularly engaged in putting together, and sent by the President. He went to the Soviets telling them basically what he wanted them to know about the process, but maintaining a sense of momentum and of their involvement which was, I think, part of his sense that in the end he would need these people in one position or another in the process, but never in control. The lead up to it was the perfect time to get them positioned properly and to be part of the answer rather than part of the problem.

*Q: How about Mubarak? He began as sort of a survivor but Saddam was such a seminal figure how did you feel about that?*

PICKERING: Well Mubarak was much the Air Force general in charge, competent, understanding where he would go, much more let's put it this way, reluctant than Sadat to take risks, to venture out on the limb, to understand that you needed to find ways to break the rigidity of the equation as it had evolved and solidified and indeed ossified on a lot of these issues. He was much more looking to the U.S. to lead rather than himself -- who would push the process ahead and be willing to take a leap. As a result, things were clearly stalled. Egypt's size and influence in the region was a mainstay of the process, but one that was more careful and more conservative about as I said getting out on a limb or trying to shake the tree.

*Q: Did the same apply to the Saudi's would you say?*

PICKERING: Yes I think the Saudi's had basically what one would call an active passive diplomacy on this issue. Up until recently, Saudi diplomacy has never been known for initiative taking and that is why the Abdullah plan which became the Arab League plan was quite a move forward on their part. They generally went along with consensus and they generally felt that inducements, funding of friends and allies, the use of that kind of influence to obtain support was more effective than straightforward diplomacy. That was something they could do -- that was their core skill, if I could put it that way, but it tended to be behind the scenes and tended to be something while very important, was not publicly known.

*Q: One of the things that has struck me over the years is that the whole well the problem with the Middle East is basically the Palestinian problem, what to do about the Palestinians and here you have these countries which particularly Saudi Arabia and some of the other ones who had been supporting the cause of the poor Palestinians but they seem to have been quite happy to essentially keep them barefoot and pregnant. Maybe it's the Palestinian corruption or something but I would have thought there would have been a possibility of turning them into a very productive group of people.*

PICKERING: The real problem was there was never any agreement with Israel for a long time on a Palestinian state. For a long time Israeli's said they wanted the Palestinians to be part of a Jordanian state. Then after that disappeared there was no agreement about what would happen. Actually, George W Bush deserves a lot of credit for having brought in a pushed the two-state concept -- tried to get the Israelis to accept the two-state solution. It had been hard to nail down all along -- as to how it should be done. Everybody knew that it would have to happen, but the idea of bringing it out of the diplomatic closet and putting it there in front of everybody was an important step.

The Palestinians were always operating on the basis that they were fractioned, subordinated. On the other hand, both because of United Nations assistance and because of modernization and to some extent because of the direct and indirect influence of the Israeli's, they became one at the same time better educated, more technically competent and more interested in representative government. They went to Saudi Arabia in the Gulf, took these technical jobs, sometimes they took leading jobs in things like the oil industry and in local administration where their skills and background experience could be very valuable. They were obviously not going to become political leaders in Saudi Arabia, but they became the right hand men of the political leaders and to some extent the policy advisers and technocrats and all the rest.

The Jordanians attempted to do the same thing using mainly East Bank tribal Jordanians and Palestinians. The East Bank Jordanians worked in the security industry or in the security business or the army business or the police business. The Palestinians worked in commercial business and technology and oil development and things of that sort. That prevailed for a couple of decades or more in the Gulf and these people became very influential in that regard. Their remittances were an economic boost for Jordan. The difficulty was that the process hadn't moved along to the point where there was some way for the Saudi's to say now you've got your state, let's go ahead and make a go of it. But there is every conviction in people's hearts despite the deep antipathy in the present circumstances and the hate and mistrust that has grown up that over time the Palestinians could be very competent, particularly if well lead. They also became very efficient at corruption and Arafat became very efficient at divide and rule. He became very effective at creating multiple security agencies to watch each other and to watch all his enemies. He was paranoid about all those things. The situation didn't help...

*Q: Probably with good reason.*

PICKERING: Yea and the situation didn't help in relieving his deep sense of paranoia about these questions.

*Q: Did the Gulf States play much of a role during this time?*

PICKERING: No, not huge at all. They were seen basically as in the early stages the '80s struggling to achieve their own existence. They had three overwhelming concerns geographically. The Iraqi's who wanted to extend under Saddam Hussein their influence and maybe even their control down in the Gulf. The Saudi's who were their neighbors and the Iranians who were the Shia across the Gulf. So they didn't live in a comfortable neighborhood, they were all tiny states and most of them were fairly well endowed with oil and gas income. They wanted to have an opportunity to develop and exploit that so they played a low posture role. They did get together in the Gulf Cooperation Council meetings and began to try to find ways to solidify some of their activities; that was mainly under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and certainly under the Saudi big umbrella which was the key member of that organization.

But as they achieved wealth and developed some of their own personalities, they've done various things. Qatar particularly, under the then Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim, now prime minister and its ruler, the Emir, tended mainly reflecting Hamad's personality, to go and seek to do strange and different things. As you probably know, he visited Saddam Hussein several times before the U.S. invasion in 2003, but he was active even back in the '90s in Qatari foreign policy. He staked out Qatar's independence and influence by using money and taking stands that were not necessarily popular with the U.S. or taking initiatives to see whether he could broker or manage diplomatic change. Of course, the Qatari's this year have been recently quite influential in helping to put the Lebanese equation back together or at least working hard to try to do that. Al Jazeera, the radio and television service started and run by Qatar, was seen in the US as an irritant and worse during the Bush administration in particular.



*Q: You had your Jordanian-Israeli experience and all. Did you find that in your position some time that you had to sort of sit on people within the State Department this far or more really the political element elsewhere and say you know don't think you can dictate to these people, understand where they are coming from.*

PICKERING: Well I think that a lot of that was there; certainly the teams that dealt with these states in NEA were highly professional. There was a lot of respect up the line and particularly with Madeleine and the president and Sandy with people like Bruce Riedel and Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk and Ned Walker who were leaders in various phases of this activity. It was also true that with respect to Jordan and Israel, the 1994 peace agreement had taken away a lot of the sting. But we had, too, during this period of time the Mossad try to eliminate the Hamas leader, Khaled Mashal, in Jordan and which backfired. When they attempted to poison him, King Hussein using his own considerable influence with the Israeli's got Netanyahu to send over the antidote and save the guys life on the threat of breaking off all relations with Israel. That left all kinds of bad blood in Jordan. The Israeli's were using the cover of their embassy in Jordan to carry out the assassination plot against Hamas at a time when the Israeli's felt very unhappy about Hamas. Of course Netanyahu was the one who politically hewed to the hardest line against what was going on and disliked Hamas because of its role in Gaza. It was fascinating because Hamas, as I mentioned before, was being at least if not supported certainly not opposed by the Israeli's as it developed in Gaza in the period of the '70s. The Israelis saw it than as an effective, religiously-based counter-weight against sectarian secular el Fatah with whom they had had so many problems.

*Q: Well Tom I'm looking at...I've got to...*

PICKERING: You've got to run.

*Q: I've got to run off now but we will pick this up the next time. We are talking about '97...*

PICKERING: To the 2000 period.

*Q: Period and we are talking about the Middle East and let's talk about terrorism there and we will move over into Sudan, Afghanistan and then we will move on eventually to the Far East and South Asia and Latin America including Cuba and all that. OK.*

PICKERING: OK.

*Q: OK, today is the 8/8/08. Yes, I don't know if the Orientals have a...*

PICKERING: It's a big day in China.

*Q: 11/11 is big but anyway 8/008, or something.*

PICKERING: Or 08/08/08

*Q: Tom, we are talking about '97-2000 period. What was the feeling about well we've talked about Israel the last time? What about terrorism because we really haven't talked about Middle Eastern terrorists?*

PICKERING: Well today is almost the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on the two embassies in East Africa so it's probably an appropriate time.

*Q: Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.*

PICKERING: My feeling was that we were quite concerned about the possibility of such attacks, but much more concerned after the fact maybe than we were before, but seriously concerned. We had followed for a long time the development of Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden from his residence in Sudan for a period of time to his move to Afghanistan. We had focused a lot of intelligence resources on him but we also knew even in those days that he had a very dispersed security plan. He worked indirectly with many groups in many countries that were not in any way linked in a direct way with him. It was done by them through cut outs, they were organizations that were fundamentalists that he was able by using emissaries to recruit. People came to Afghanistan for training in various terrorist arts and we expected those efforts to continue. We had a sense that we were in his target sights as a country but we were not, I think, as nearly well prepared, as we should have been with things like embassies with excellent standoff distance from car bombs and truck bomb attacks, which hit us in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. We over a period of time, quite disgracefully, through a process of leaks to the press on intercepting cell phones, saw our intelligence access to him shut off so that as soon as it became known that we could hear his cell phone talk that went away quickly.

*Q: Speaking about leaks of this nature I mean this is anybody leaking this to the media or anywhere else really has to know that they're really cutting out certain areas. I mean it is a serious breach of something; did you get any feel for what was behind these things?*

PICKERING: No, it was almost impossible to know. You had some Washington reporters who had excellent access who kind of reveled in printing stuff across the board that seemed to have at least a pipeline heavily into the intelligence establishment. In some cases it was into the National Security establishment. I suspect they got this from people who received the information and the information was under pretty tight control. I think it got on tighter control afterward, but then it was less useful because bin Laden and company knew quickly how to shut off their vulnerabilities as we leaked them. They went clearly from the use of electronic communications to the use of couriers, which are very hard to get.

*Q: Basically clapped sticks.*

PICKERING: Exactly.

*Q: I mean you are an old East African hand; did East Africa loom at all as you know one almost thinks it used to be the Islamic dhow route of trading but East Africa seemed to be kind of an unlikely place to the uninitiated for anybody.*

PICKERING: I think that is right. Certainly my experience with East Africa was in the '60s. It was a way back, but we did not have a sense that there were or there weren't large numbers of Islamic fundamentalists. There are mixed population in East Africa, African Islam tends to be pretty relaxed and not very deeply engaged in fundamentalism. In East Africa, as you know, there were South Asian Muslims as well as Arab Muslims. They seemed perhaps to be more of a recruiting ground because of their connections back to their homelands and maybe connection through even a families, one doesn't know totally.

But whatever happened, there were enough Muslims there who were educated in things like bomb making and could find the materials to do it. We were lucky that the bomb never got into the basement of the embassy in Nairobi, although it was horrendous and the devastation was brutal, particularly among totally innocent Kenyans who happened to be in the neighborhood. The embassy in Dar es Salaam, which I knew much better when I was there, had been built as the Israeli embassy. At the time of the 1966 war, the Tanzanians broke relations with Israel and we later bought the building. The Israeli's had some set back in that embassy. It was far from perfect, but it was a help and so we lost fewer people as casualties, particularly because the truck was not able to get through the gate. But those were very devastating attacks and we were quite lucky they weren't a lot worse than they turned out to be.

*Q: I've interviewed Pru Bushnell and she was obviously both hit by that very badly, in fact she was our ambassador in Nairobi, but she was saying that she had raised security problems and had not really gotten very much of a response.*

PICKERING: Yes, well I think that...

*Q: This was prior to the attack.*

PICKERING: A lot of that prior to the attack and I think Pru's record was as good as anyone's could have been under the circumstances. I saw her and she expressed her frustration to me as well, although I think all of my conversations unfortunately occurred after the attack. But it went through channels.' I don't know who was responding. I presume that initially that was a DS (diplomatic security) question and maybe the desk's for response. I'm sure, in defense of DS, they got these concerns from all around the world and picking out the exact set of indicators that would lead to a devastating attack is extremely hard. If the noise is clutter and the background is cluttered with those kinds of indications and it's safe to say that our intelligence wasn't wonderful before the fact. My feeling was that there were some indications, but none of those were hard enough or clear enough to be able to pinpoint what was coming at us in a way that would have allowed us to do more. What we did in general afterward, we should have done before hand, which was generally tighten up our standards and Bill Crowe who led the people who did the report provided excellent recommendations...

*Q: Deputy assistant for...*

PICKERING: Admiral Crowe and much of what he recommended was put into place, but only after the fact; hopefully it will help us in other places but it sure wasn't there to help us in Nairobi and Dar.

*Q: Were we getting much in the way of at least to you...you are talking about the clutter of information. Are there threats against you and was this part of the ambiance would you say or not?*

PICKERING: I think that I could look at it as discrete enough to act on. Now certainly you had Dick Clarke over at the White House. Dick and I stayed in very close touch throughout the whole period. Dick was watching this with intensity even beforehand and Dick was not known to shy away from taking action when he thought it should be taken and Dick's alarm bells didn't ring either unfortunately on any of this. To some extent the White House got a lot of this stuff before we did, because Dick was there sucking it in and made clear he wanted it, had to have it. But this isn't to blame anybody, it is just to say that when you get a lot of information and a lot of it tends to be kind of in the noise or less than perfect in terms of indicators and that's usually the way with intelligence it's very hard to form a judgment you can use to take action.

We did have interestingly enough quite good information on a meeting that was supposed to take place at one of the training camps in Afghanistan in which it was indicated that Osama was to be present. This was the major bit of information that led to the follow-up attack, aerial and Tomahawk, which took place within two weeks of the embassy bombings. There was a hope and expectation that by hitting these training camps we might even be able to knock out Osama bin Laden. We had a very difficult problem of what to do about the large number of Americans in Pakistan. I was personally involved because I had family there, but before I could do anything, Sandy Berger called me and said, "I think since we've decided to go ahead on this you better get the families out of Pakistan." I said well I was grateful for the decision because I had a personal interest in it but it was not one of those things where personal interest should be part of the decision making.

*Q: Who was this?*

PICKERING: Sandy Berger was the...

*Q: No but I mean who was the...*

PICKERING: My daughter and her husband and kids were there; they had just arrived, as a matter of fact. So I called the ambassador on the secure line and I told him that I couldn't tell him why but the reason had to be basically that we were concerned by the evolving situation in Pakistan. The airplane would arrive on Saturday night and we wanted all the dependants on the airplane and we wanted all non-essentials out; this was Tom Simons and that there was no appeal. Tom was not happy at all and he said it's going to be very difficult and I said, "Tom, it is going to be very difficult but you will understand...you will come to understand what's going on."

*Q: This is Tom who?*

PICKERING: Tom Simons.

*Q: Tom Simons.*

PICKERING: And so he did and he did his job and people came out. Of course, that was obviously some kind of telltale. We also sent General Joe Ralston, vice chairman of the joint chiefs of staff to see Jehangir Karamat, who was then chief of the army staff in Pakistan. We felt that since we were using 80 Tomahawks or something like that and we didn't know if the Pakistani's would see them or not. But if they saw them we didn't want them to believe it was an attack by India, which was something that we had to worry about. So we sent him over and he was to have dinner with Karamat and at the time the missiles were passing over and he was to tell Karamat what was going on. That didn't give Karamat much time if he wanted to leak it. As far as he said I think Karamat stayed in the room with him the whole time ...

*Q: Were we concerned at that time because right now it's very much in the front page of the paper about the Pakistan intelligence service and their connection with them?*

PICKERING: We were, we were concerned before, during and after and I think the concern remains, as you've seen in the last week, the ISI.

*Q: Somebody told me that I interviewed talking about this attack saying that it got postponed for a couple of hours, for some reason, and this postponement meant that the media essentially was just dispersed.*

PICKERING: No, I think that's a mistake. I think he dispersed before the attack came in but it was serendipitous and I know of no postponement and I was involved very directly in the unrolling of this and all the stuff that we did to prepare for it. I can remember talking with the J3 over at the joint chiefs to make sure that it had gone off when it was supposed to have gone off. I think everything that we knew on the time scale was done perfectly then. We sent messages around as soon as he confirmed that the attack had taken place all around the world to leaders all drafted from the president to let them know what was going on. The moving of dependents was an unavoidable necessity and likely itself a tip off to bin Laden

Of course, we struck at the same time the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan because we believed that earth samples that were reportedly taken near the entrance to the plant showed the presence of a chemical precursor, which never occurred naturally. This was confirmed by independent civilian laboratories in the United States outside the intelligence ring. We don't know what happened but we were convinced on the basis of that evidence and, of course, the lesson there is that even with good chemical analysis you may or may not be right. We didn't know what was going on prior to that at Al-Shifa or for how long this particular chemical precursor would stay in the soil or whether, in fact, the evidence was doctored. I just don't know and I don't know enough about the collection process to understand that.

*Q: Al-Qaeda was kind of new on the, I mean it had been around but all of a sudden it really caught our attention. Did you or your cohorts get together and say, "What the hell do these guys want? What are they after?"*

PICKERING: We had a pretty good idea even then that their major concern was in Saudi Arabia. Their most significant concern was that the Saudi government had permitted the introduction of American forces at the time of the first Gulf war and those forces remained and that this was sacrilege in the land of the two holy mosques. It also then went to the nature of the Saudi government, the ruling family, allegations of corruption and allegations of behavior that didn't meet their fundamentalist religious standards. It's quite unusual in some ways because, of course, the bin Laden family, bin Laden's father came from Yemen and were immigrants to Saudi Arabia. They made huge amounts of money in Saudi Arabia in the construction business.

*Q: I lived in the bin Laden house in Teheran back in the '60s.*

PICKERING: Did you? I admit one of Osama's brothers or an uncle who was running the construction firm showed up at a dinner party for me in Riyadh or Jeddah. They were very bright and intelligent people obviously showed no signs of aberrations that apparently he picked up and it turns out he seems to have been the kind of unusual person in the family that turned to religion as opposed to construction or other money making ventures. He used his skills and intellectual activity to develop the Al-Qaeda operation to recruit people and affiliates. But it seemed to me they were in those days still more the aiders and abettors and provocateurs in respect to Saudi Arabia and that in a religious sense the United States was not important. As an enemy, it was important because it represented both foreigners and non-Muslims, but the major concern they had was with Saudi Arabia and what they considered to be the desecration of their holy land. The American military presence was part of that in aiding and supporting the Saudi royal family, but so was the royal family. As a result, you see subsequent to 9/11, a number of major efforts in 2002, 2003, 2004 inside Saudi Arabia both against Saudi's and foreigners and foreign installations which the Saudi's seemingly now have pretty well found a way to wrap up. They were clearly part of the Al-Qaeda effort to push out the royal family.

*Q: Did you get a feel for Richard Clarke who was the NSC man on terrorist?*

PICKERING: I had known Dick before, he and I had worked together in the past and Dick was a very interesting personality. Dick was obviously an extreme activist in his efforts to get at this. I think in the end all of which proved to be justified despite the fact that he was being seen by some critics maybe to have been hyperactive in some of these cases. I disagreed with Dick occasionally; Dick had sense that in the retaliation for the embassy bombing we ought to go after a whole series of targets in Sudan. I felt the evidence that I saw, and others agreed, only justified going after the Al-Shifa plant and that in the end is where the president decided to go. Dick was an early advocate of the use of drones and then finding ways to arm them. In part because we had no other effective way of going after Osama in Afghanistan.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the president and the National Security Adviser Sandy Berger? How did they feel about this?*

PICKERING: Well I think that they took it very seriously particularly after the embassy bombings and were deeply concerned about it. Those concerns continued to grow as we had the attack against the naval ship au Aden (USS Cole) and concerns obviously coming out of the first attack against the World Trade Center.

*Q: This is the Sheik...*

PICKERING: Yes the blind Sheik.

*Q: The blind Sheik.*

PICKERING: And it was very clear that George Tenet and the agency were concerned. They had stepped up their collection efforts, They had tried to work all sources. This was not an easy organization to crack. The cells knew each other, a lot of them had grown up together, it was not easy to introduce people into the mix and you know that required a kind of recruitment effort that was not easy to perform and certainly these people once inside were all pretty much dedicated to the organization and unlikely to change their minds.

*Q: What about how did we view Afghanistan? The Taliban basically ran most of the country didn't they at this point?*

PICKERING: Well by this time the Taliban had almost complete control. I would suspect that there was resistance up in the northeast with the northern alliance and Masoud and in the Hazara area in the center, which was the Shia area which had close links with Iran. We know that in Mazar-i-Sharif as fighting went on, Iranian officials were killed, seemingly consular officials, although everyone believes they probably had some intelligence role in supporting Shia resistance to the Taliban. The Iranians naturally saw the Taliban as Sunnis, as jihadis that were a danger to them as well as to everybody else. They were not able to provide the degree of support and the degree of commitment necessary to roll them. The Pakistanis depending upon with whom you were dealing were either for them or against them. One of the reasons that they stayed around as long as they did was not only their own deep personal commitment and the kind of military equipment they inherited after the Russian defeat, much of which we had provided in the training, but also their continued links to the Pakistan intelligence service (ISI). The support that they were receiving from the Arab world was important too and we worked very hard to try to cut that off.

At one point both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had some kind of diplomatic links with the Taliban. We succeeded over a period of time getting that cut off. We worked to get the Afghan airline, Ariana, restricted in its flight destinations. I can remember in 2000, I went to Pakistan and talked to Musharraf and said that we were getting into the position where if you weren't for us you were against us and it looked like Pakistan was sitting on the fence. As a result we would have to take that seriously. He sort of said, "Well we've tried as hard as we can with the Taliban." We had by then known that the Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki, had gone to see the Taliban with absolutely no success. We had then an offer from the Pakistani's, which I took up immediately, to meet with one of the Taliban in Islamabad. They turned out their deputy foreign minister, Jalili, who was not in any way an educated man and not in any way likely to be very flexible, besides the fact that he probably had no instructions. But I saw him in the company of the interior minister of Pakistan who had provided us with the interpreter since we had no one in the embassy who spoke Pushtun. We had a conversation with no result at all, although we did our best to impress the Taliban with the sense that we were taking this very

seriously and we would continue to do so. They were getting into danger and if they continued down this road bad things would happen to them. Well, bad things didn't happen right away, but they did later.

*Q: Well did you or were we beginning to look upon the Taliban or were we looking upon the Taliban as a real matter of concern to us not just as disinterest but an interest concern to us?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, we were principally concerned because they had protected, shielded and guarded the Al-Qaeda organization and Osama bin Laden inside Afghanistan and made it very difficult for us to get at him. We wanted him arrested and turned over to us. I made that point to Jalili. He said that under Pushtun-wali, their code of conduct, they could not do it. We were beginning to develop relations with Massoud and others to see what we could do with other tribal groups with whom we could work probably out of our contacts coming out of the anti-Soviet period. That took time, but it was working and we were beginning to get some help and information; but it was less than totally satisfactory.

The situation had developed, I think, probably by 2000 in a summit meeting that President Clinton had with Putin probably near the beginning of the year in which President Clinton suggested and Putin agreed that we would set up a working group on Afghanistan. I was not at the summit meetings, but I knew roughly about this. A little while after that Sandy Berger or Madeleine Albright said that the president wanted me to head the U.S. side. The opposite number was a guy I knew quite well, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, then deputy, later head of the SVR and former Soviet Ambassador to India.

Trubnikov was a number two when I was in Moscow in the Soviet external intelligence service, the SVR. The SVR was part of the old KGB that broke up and they hived off their external intelligence service as a separate organization. For a while Primakov ran it and Trubnikov was his deputy. Trubnikov was a South Asian expert, a person that I had conversations with who's knowledge of South Asia was extraordinarily good and who was in my view, while a typical Soviet intelligence officer, also reasonable and easy to get along with. We had our first meeting in the middle of 2000 in Washington, which didn't get very far; it was just the beginning of a set-up meeting. Then we had a meeting later in Moscow near the end of 2000 in which the Russians were prepared to share more information on their relationships with the Northern Alliance which had been close and abiding for a long period of time. With Massoud it was basically an alignment of enemies of the Taliban as much as an alignment of people with a common kind of interest in the future of Afghanistan.

So we had begun through that arrangement. The agency obviously had used its relationships and its ability to get to Massoud and others to begin to build up as we had seen now in the subsequent books and things a relationship that was coming along pretty well when Massoud was blown up on the Saturday before 9/11.

*Q: Yeah, well was there you might say, a meeting of interest with the Russians at that point about the...*



PICKERING: There was basically a sense of common concern. Was there a total meeting of interest? Probably not enough, but there was sufficient for a meeting of interest to have it produce a set of relationships, which I later understood, continued in which more effective work was done but which now seems to have run its course.

*Q: Turning a little bit to the West what about Iran? How did we view Iran?*

PICKERING: Well that too was extremely interesting because there was no question at all that in the second half of the Clinton administration we had a serious interest in and concern about Iran. Iran's nuclear program had become a subject of interest to the administration from the beginning. I remember when I was in Russia this was subject of growing interest to our policy. In the early part of the '90s, it was our policy that the Iranians should not have a nuclear program. They didn't need one and we attempted to impose our judgment on it. From our prospective it was bad for them to have it even through under the non-proliferation treaty they were allowed to have a civil nuclear program. We were concerned it was being used to make a nuclear weapon. I can remember, probably in 1994 -- 95, writing a cable from Moscow saying that we weren't getting anywhere with the Russians in opposing their nuclear program in general, why didn't we see if we could sell support in a civil program for keeping them away from of the sensitive technologies like enrichment and reprocessing. We probably, I think, could have, had we moved and done something along those lines. But we were deeply dug in and the tendency on Iran had been only to move to a posture that might bring the Iranians along with something long after the Iranian have totally succeeded in moving beyond it themselves. We never got there. My cable was never answered. It was the beginning of my feeling that we were always right on Iran, but usually three years too late!

We were hopeful that Khatami when was elected in '98, might provide a reasonable opening. We were deeply concerned at the same time that the Iranians and their support for Saudi Hezbollah had led to the Al-Khobar bombing. It was a very difficult issue for us to deal with and we were trying to work that with the Saudi's without a lot of success. But, be that as it may, it was clear to Secretary Albright and others that we should try to use the Khatami election, seemingly a reformer, to see whether we could open contacts and we were certainly ready to open contacts at that point.

After Khatami's election we did two things -- put together a speech for the secretary...

*Q: I'm talking about Beth Jones is talking about doing that. She was deputy assistant secretary of State dealing with the Chicago bad boys as long as we didn't have relations with the Near East.*

PICKERING: We attempted to do that, somewhere along the line words crept in there which the Iranians either mistook or misinterpreted as being antithetical to their interests, as opposed to an effort to try and open things up. We had, by that time I think, had either sent or were about to send a message through the Swiss to the Iranians that we were prepared to have conversations with them without preconditions. We basically said that it would probably be at my level to begin with, but that we left it open on terms of modalities and other things. We just never heard back on anything and years later after I left government I talked with the Iranians in New York

about it and they said, “Well you know the history of our relationship is that every time we are ready, you are not, and every time you are ready, we are not”. I got the message then at Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt -- for whatever internal reasons they were not able or willing to pick up that invitation.

But we were concerned and we continued to communicate with them. We were concerned that during that period of time among other things that oil exports from Iraq, contrary to the embargo, were taking place through smaller and medium sized tankers. They would move from Iraqi waters across the Shatt al-Arab mouth into Iranian waters under the protection of the revolutionary guard navy, not the national navy. They would move in Iranian waters down the coast sometimes for a very considerable distance until they could break out and take their cargos through the Strait of Hormuz into international commerce. It was very hard for us to go after them inside Iranian waters and we sent several messages on this. At least at one point that appeared to have an effect. Our supposition was that the IRGC navy was making so much money off this illegal transit trade that at whatever local level this took place they were allowing it to happen without necessarily telling anybody. We were able to get into a higher level and say this was not in Iran’s interest much less in ours and they were violating the UN sanctions and they ought to cut it out -- without any threats. Over time occasionally they did, we saw cutbacks and then it would begin again.

*Q: In dealing with Iran I guess even up to today our sort of our perspective is that we are really dealing with two elements and they don’t necessarily...the Iranian government...*

PICKERING: That’s the height of over simplification.

*Q: But this is the Middle East.*

PICKERING: We thought maybe for purposes of general division you could begin with two elements, but we quickly saw that it was a great deal more complicated and very messy. It was very difficult to understand. We even found that even Iranians found it difficult to understand about what the various groupings were and who was, in fact, scratching whose back and which piece of which particular set of decisions were made where. But there was no question at all that there was a government structure in a formal sense and then there was essentially a kind of jihadi structure, the Basij, the volunteers, the revolutionary guard much of which had come out of their experience in their war with Iraq. And much of which was the...

*Q: OK, we were talking about Iran and the ...*

PICKERING: The only other thing I think we should add on Iran is that somewhere along in this period, probably before I became under secretary we had established with the UN a kind of six plus two conversation which included Iran which was focused heavily on Afghanistan, it was centered around Afghanistan’s neighbors, plus the U.S. and Russia which allowed us to have an opportunity to meet with the Iranians not that it was very easy to talk with them. At one point there was to be a meeting in New York and the UN told us Foreign Minister Kharazi from Iran was coming. So Madeleine Albright agreed she would go, of course, she showed up and Kharazi didn’t. We weren’t sure for a moment who was there actually representing Iran to tell you how

good our information was but it turned out to be Mr. Javad Zarif the man who later became their permanent representative in New York. (Now, 2104, Foreign Minister)

In any event, later on I think Colin Powell actually had a chance to meet and shake hands with the Iranian foreign minister at one of the later meetings of the six plus two.

*Q: At these openings or we kept looking and trying to do something with Iran which occurred at a long time...but during the time you were in Washington did you feel that there was this later the neocons, the conservative wing of the Republican Party in Congress and elsewhere hovering around trying to make sure nothing happened?*

PICKERING: No I think that was much less an area of focus. Where they had some success was that the neocons and the Democrats joined together on Iraq and I think by '97 or '98 we had a joint resolution in favor of regime change which I thought was kind of wacko but we did. Then we had an authorization to use \$100 million in defense funds with no new money to support this wonderful effort. Defense was only prepared to provide surplus typewriters to the Iraqi resistance and by then poor Frank Ricciardone, who did a marvelous job, was appointed to be the representative to the Iraqi resistance. They met in London; I saw them in New York at one point. They were a mixture from Chalabi to the monarchists and back. We gradually got them together but there was very little in the way of funding because the Congress had basically said, "Yes, you can use \$100 million out of your hide over at the Defense Department if we were really interested in regime change. None of us were really at all interested. As you remember. the agency it had an effort in '96 before I got back to see whether, in fact, they could unseat Saddam. They could build up an agent network and, of course, Saddam rolled them all up and they lost lots and lots of people and it was a very bad operation from that perspective; it was very clear that Saddam's defensive mechanisms were sufficiently strong to have detected very early what we were doing and kept it on the string until it became a danger to them and then basically he destroyed it.

*Q: Moving on what about obviously we had no particular interest in the Middle East and East Asia but how about India and Pakistan? Was there anything I mean obviously you've been in India, was there anything going on there during your time that was particularly significant then?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, there was a number of very significant things. There was no question at all that we were clearly looking at India as a new and emerging relationship on which we could build. The Indian government by then had shifted over to the hands of the Hindu Nationalist Party, the BJP. We saw signs of that coming when I was in India much earlier than that at the beginning of the decade. The Hindu Nationalist Party was as interested in relations with the U.S. maybe even more so than the Congress Party. The Congress Party was still wedded to its theoretical socialism and internationalist party was much less so although still caught in the grip to some extent of that kind of activity.

Strobe was extremely interested in this. Strobe ran a small group, which I attended every once in a while because of my interest in India and my background in India. Strobe was able to open a fascinating dialogue with Jaswant Singh who was the former military officer, former major general and foreign minister of India. They talked extensively. (Strobe has written about this) We

were preoccupied with the Indian potential for a military nuclear program, which was, of course, self evident from 1974 test and then after 1998, with the Indian and Pakistani tests. A good bit of Strobe's dialogue with Jaswant Singh was devoted to seeing whether we could get the Indians to introduce measures that, in fact, would do two or three things.

One that would keep them, as I think they did, far away from proliferating any of this information and knowledge that they had. Secondly, much more difficult, getting them to commit not to test again and thirdly, perhaps even more difficult, to adopt a posture with respect to the size and the deployment pattern of their nuclear equipped forces which would build stability into the process rather than instability. So this meant on that last point everything from asking them to separate the storage of their warheads from the delivery vehicles, for example, and not to put nuclear weapons close to the border or cease-fire line with Pakistan, to develop a limitation on the number of weapons they actually needed and thought sufficient. The Indians were very careful to say that they only wanted a sufficient number of weapons but never able in any way at all to define it or indeed tell us about the parameters that would take them there.

*Q: Did they throw the number of nuclear weapons we have into your face?*

PICKEING: No, but they did very carefully speak frequently and often about China at the time the BJP tested as a threat. It is my belief is the BJP tested for of several reasons.

One was they tested because the pro-nuclear community was exercising a particular amount of influence. For many years that group had been distraught that they were not allowed, in fact, to be able to prove that their nuclear weapons were going to work and perhaps to derive more information for the future. Even more so they and the political nationalist community wanted to take India into the family of nuclear weapons states rather than to be kept out. India was half way in between because they had called their '74 test a peaceful explosion and abjured nuclear weapons at that point. They clearly either before or after the fact used the concern they had with their Chinese neighbor as a reason for developing the weapon and with whom they had serious border disputes and with whom they had a conflict in 1962 as a reason to test -- to develop a deterrent.

All of these kinds of explanations were rolled up into one and all of them were designed obviously to justify the test program but also designed to fend off what the U.S. and others in particular wanted them to do with respect to their future nuclear posture. We saw their nuclear posture, and still do, maybe with less sharpness and clarity given the uncertainty of their relationship with Pakistan, as still a kind of fuse on a powder keg in the region. Of course, we worked hard once they had tested to try to keep the Pakistani's from testing on a tit-for-tat basis. That failed and we had that round of Pakistani tests and we had a lot of international condemnation. We had a lot of effort to try to get them to roll things back. We introduced significant numbers of sanctions and trade controls and things of that sort to both Pakistan and India. A good bit that has been worn off and a good bit it now has been over taken by the current effort on the part of the Bush 43 administration to develop a nuclear cooperation package with India -at least on the civil side and divide up the civil and military. Hopefully, if not right away then in time they will introduce some further self-restrictions on the Indian side with respect to

where they are going on their military nuclear program. As you know, the Bush effort is highly controversial and it is not certain it will get through but this was part of a longer-range effort.

The Clinton administration despite the nuclear test, nevertheless, continued to make an effort to build a relationship with India. It was helped, and I use that word very carefully, by the Pakistani decision later on to occupy Indian outposts along the line of control in northern Kashmir at very high altitude -- outposts which were traditionally abandoned by the Indians on their side of the line of control for the winter and then reoccupied in the spring. The Pakistani's occupied those outposts before the Indians could return in the spring. When the Indians found them there, obviously they committed themselves to push them out which they did. The fighting was contained to the area around Kargil where this had happened, but we were very supportive of the Indian position on this and leaned very hard on the Pakistani's. The Indians essentially through main military force were able to dislodge the Pakistanis and on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif came to the United States to see the president to see if he could enlist the president in some solution. The president said the only solution is that you have to withdraw and Nawaz Sharif did that. He went back and said this might be the end of my government and eventually it was, to withdraw but it was apparently his decision with the military and the military's decision apparently without him to carry out the effort in the first place.

In any event, this suited the Indians and U.S.-Indian relationship remarkably well because while it was a dangerous and difficult situation and a dicey one at some point it involved heavy active fighting, it could have blown up. The Indians saw for the first time that the United States was not "taking a totally even handed, balanced view".

*Q: We were titling toward them for once.*

PICKERING: We tilted toward them for once on the basis of the facts. They had seen in the past what they perceived to be an uneven handed view when the facts didn't support it in their view. But this occasion we did this not because it was necessary to curry favor with the Indians, but because we saw the facts in India's favor and we saw the Pakistani action as dangerous and provocative, uncalled for and crazy.

In the meantime, we had been working hard and continued to work hard to do what we could to calm things down in the Kashmir area along the line of control which separated India and Pakistani military forces, but which was frequently the location of artillery duels and other firing. The allegations were certainly for the Indians signs that these firing sessions were provoked by the Pakistani's as cover for infiltration of insurgents into Kashmir. There was some reason to believe that this was the case. There was some reason also to believe that there were training camps, some of which were co-located with Osama's people, and were being used to take individuals from the fundamentalists political organizations in Pakistan; many of them refugees from Kashmir, and train them preparatory to re-infiltrating them into Kashmir where they conducted a guerrilla warfare campaign against the Indians.

The Pakistani's were tied into this because they believed the Indians were not going to move under any other basis except their use of military force -- to create an enormously disruptive situation among the Muslims in Kashmir. Then they thought the Indians would be pressed to

move on giving up Kashmir to them. A somewhat illusory conclusion we all thought. The Indians as a result had to deploy large military forces and continued to suffer setbacks in Kashmir as a result of these activities. They were then frequently publicized. India sought our help although it was very clear that India's view with respect to international involvement in Kashmir was that they wanted no help from the international community, that in the past the UN resolutions had not been sufficiently supportive.

The Pakistani's wanted to base a future solution on the UN resolutions which they felt helped their case and would make in the end Kashmir a Muslim appendage of Pakistan which was certainly their objective. The Indian view, therefore, was while Americans could not be prohibited from talking to them privately and bilaterally about Kashmir, they wanted no help otherwise, especially not in the UN. They wanted no efforts to blend things together, they wanted no UN intervention or otherwise. Of course, the Indians as a result of the events of '48, held the bulk of the territory of Kashmir and the Pakistani's held a small piece. Kashmir is geographically very interesting because there is an entire northern territory called Baltistan which has been Pakistan's since '47. While the Indians might contest it because it was part of the princely state of Kashmir, it's separated by high mountains from the rest of Kashmir to the south and certainly is the connecting link between Pakistan and China. So the Pakistani's would not be....

*Q: That's that long corridor?*

PICKERING: No, you are thinking of Afghanistan.

*Q: Afghanistan, oh I'm sorry.*

PICKERING: This is the piece up on the Karakoram south of the Karakoram highway. In any event that's one part of Kashmir. In the south you have the Muslim area around Srinagar, you have a mainly Hindu area in the south and west in the jungle (Jammu), and then further in the center and to the east is Ladakh, which is Buddhist. So they are not completely ethnically obviously all Muslim, all Hindu and all Buddhists, but they are predominately so. The Muslim area around Srinagar is where most of the security difficulties take place and where the Muslims don't like living under Hindu rule despite the fact that the Indians with the calming down in recent years of some of the insurgent activity have eased off on their pressure on the Muslim population.

But it's a very difficult area and, of course, we were concerned that flare ups around Kashmir could lead to actions across the border and at times in the past we have seen a build-up on the Indian and Pakistan side in response to some of these efforts. On one particular occasion and I think it was Bob Gates who went over in the early '90s when it looked like the Indians were developing a huge military exercise called Brass Tacks that might just move across the border. We were helpful in defusing that at one point. But this remains a very difficult problem.

The Indians had understood that with the disappearance of the Soviet Union their relationship with the Soviet Union was no longer either a continued balance against China or necessarily an offset to the U.S. So having examined the question I think they made several decisions. One was to modernize their economy which was essential and that required serious reforms because of the

history in India of 'London School of Economics socialism' was not helping them in a serious way.

*Q: I think it was a far more pernicious than Lumumba University or Moscow University or anything like that.*

PICKERING: Well this was all based on wonderful people's best ideas about how to march gaily off into the sunset, but it turned out to be fairly mistaken and wrongheaded and the Indian execution of this turned out to be basically very sub continental. So in a sense it built up huge bureaucracies which were terribly under paid which has led to increased corruption but also to massive government control. We all knew that as the 'License Raj'. So you had to pay for licenses, which was basically an impediment to carrying out reasonable kinds of economic development activity -- and that is it in a nutshell.

But the other thing the Indians decided is to find a relationship with a new balance in the world as they saw it. While they weren't rapidly, egregiously cutting their ties with Moscow, Moscow was less and less able to be a source of major military equipment on the basis that you could pay in tea and get back missiles; that it was now cash and carry. The U.S. was showing serious interest in opening up to India and was willing to be balanced and was showing signs of not being so tied to Pakistan for Cold War reasons. The best the Indians could have expected in the past was a grudging equality with what they considered to be their smaller and inferior neighbor.

*Q: Were you getting from the Indians the fact that Pakistan was considered more and more to be, it's a bad term but, a failed state. I mean it just wasn't a very effective state?*

PICKERING: We had a tendency to look at Pakistan as the army state over and that the military would provide what we needed. That was first the muscle in CENTO and second unfailing anti-communist allegiance and thirdly bases and support. Then with the Soviet invasion in '79 of Afghanistan they were the workable platform to get the Soviets winkled out of Afghanistan through our help ...

*Q: OK Tom we got interrupted and what we will do is we were talking about sort of India but we were talking about how we viewed Pakistan vis-à-vis India. I want to ask at that time the relationship was changing a bit about India as becoming was it becoming an electronics center or whatever you want to call it?*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: We will talk about that.*

PICKERING: We will talk all about that.

*Q: And also how aware were we of was it Khan who was the...*

PICKERING: A.Q. Khan, yes.

*Q: A.Q. Khan and his activities and all because that was something above and beyond everything and then we will move on to the saloon and everything you can think of. Take care.*

*Q: Today is the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 with Tom Pickering. Tom, were we concerned during the time or did we have a pretty good reading on the Pakistan connection to nuclear spread to Libya and maybe even to Syria or anything else coming out of Pakistan?*

PICKERING: The best that I can remember was that we continued to be concerned, but most importantly the focus of concern was on India and Pakistan as potentially involved in a nuclear confrontation, as opposed to a beeline into the A.Q. Kahn network. I had known a lot about A.Q. Kahn from the period of time years before when I had been assistant secretary for oceans, environment and science and we did quite a bit of work on non-proliferation. Pakistan was a primary concern. I ran a small group that tried to pull together on a daily basis what was going on around the board operationally on non-proliferation questions. He figured very much in our views then and that had to do with his acquisition of materials and building centrifuges, his pulling stuff in to develop the Pakistan nuclear capability rather than pushing out with proliferation. We were still looking at Pakistan more in that perspective than we were the other way around -- at least in so far as the intelligence I was reading. Pakistan obviously was a serious issue for us. When India resumed testing, when was that May '98 both figured in our concerns. Strobe led that effort and made a major effort to try to convince Pakistan that it was not in their interest to test. It was unfortunately seen by them as too enticing an opportunity for them to show they too had a nuclear weapon. For years we had seen Pakistan exhibit considerable evidence of an interest in test programs in addition to what they were doing to develop weapons. The Pakistanis said this was a God given gift -- we can actually now prove ourselves as a nuclear power and we can do it under the excuse that the Indians have once again tested and therefore we have to "defend ourselves by having our own series of tests". So it turned out to be obviously a very seriously damaging and difficult proposition.

A lot of this focused around the time of the G-8 -- the G-8 was about to be meeting in June or July in Birmingham.

*Q: G-8 being...*

PICKERING: The group of 8...

*Q: Oh group of 8...*

PICKERING: The major economic powers plus Russia. We were meeting at Birmingham, in the UK, at that time and so it was possible to confect strong statements on the part of the G-8. We went to the Security Council; we actually imposed sanctions on both directions on a variety of activities with both India and Pakistan, so it entered into a serious downer. Out of that grew a very serious dialogue probably the first serious one we've had had with the Indians beyond the purely kind of superficial defense of each other's position. It was the dialogue between Strobe and Jaswant Singh which took place over a long period of time. Strobe has written a fascinating book on the subject since and it is well worth reading. I will kind of summarize all of that. It was his direct involvement in the effort to try to shape and mold Indian thinking about their long-term



strategic future. We attempted to do the same thing with much less success with Pakistan. Our interest in both India and Pakistan were in addition to keeping the two from becoming sources of proliferation to prevent a nuclear conflict and see what we could do to roll back their nuclear programs -- the latter a very long shot. But we didn't feel that was the most pressing and important issue at that time. We wanted to keep the two in a position to be relatively stable in the face of the instabilities that then prevailed along particularly their border -- dust ups which occurred sometimes at low level but sometimes with important consequences would not take themselves directly into large scale conventional confrontation. Inequalities in the conventional forces balance began to produce with Pakistan the possibility that they could resort to the use of nuclear weapons or threaten the use nuclear weapons in a conflict.

So the test programs heightened our interest in preventing what we might call a slide toward a miscalculation or an accidental use of nuclear weapons on the subcontinent by either India or Pakistan produced by tensions between the two. This took the form of advocating policies with the two which were not very successful. We wanted them to deploy and control their nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles in ways that would induce stability. This included a separation between warheads and delivery vehicles for example, as well as the deployment of delivery vehicles and hence warheads a considerable distance from the border or the line of control. Any prospective use would take some time and probably be observable and give them some ability to think. We thought those kinds of things made some sense. We were always interested in Pakistan in particular in providing for stability in their weapons systems -- providing them with an incentive to look at the question of whether if taken over by somebody else the weapons could be immediately inerted, whether they were technically resistant to that kind of thing as well as strong facilities and arrangements to provide for protection of the weapons against falling into the hands of either terrorists or insurgents.

*Q: Well were we concerned, particularly on the part of Pakistan, about the I don't know if you would call it Jihadists within the military?*

PICKERING: Well we were and we had been for a long period of time. The nuclear dimension, of course, added a huge incentive to that, but we have been for a long period of time very concerned about instability in Pakistan, instability coming out of potentially fundamentalist influence in the military. What became known at least among a number of people as the 'beards' in the military so to speak and what role they would play and how and what way they would have an influence. The critical corps commanders in the Pakistan military were in charge of the key ground forces elements, the large scale ground force elements. The concern was their being influenced in the direction of the beards or with the beards gaining increasing control. There were other concerns as well. A good bit of the resistance to the Soviets had come out of Pakistan and had come precisely out of the madrassa religious system in the schools that produced the Taliban who were heavily influenced by Pakistan and heavily participated in by Pakistanis. Would these religious fundamentalists become a domestic influence and if so, how and in what way? There was always a struggle; and there was a constant effort on the part of the Pakistani political leadership and then later the military to reassure us that they had not fallen into this trap.

On the other hand, there was evidence that the religious influence was present and growing. There was deep concern that this would evolve into a very heady brew -- this amalgam or

alignment between Islamic fundamentalists and Pakistan, the military and Pakistani nuclear weapons. It remains basically to this day a very serious concern. Many promote or even promise the idea that the military will not fall under their influence. The weapons will be protected and Pakistan will not fall victim to religious extremism. Their arguments make sense. But given the consequences of such weapons falling into the hands of people who might not be deterred from using them for terrorist purposes against the United States or others, the concern continues and is not in my view misplaced.

*Q: How about on the Indian side? Were we concerned about right wing Hindu based parties or not?*

PICKERING: Well it was clearly the BJP, the Hindu-based party, the Hindu Nationalist Party that made the decision to test. It was clear that the decision had been pending on the Indian agenda since the test of '74. At times there were clear indications to us that this decision was getting closer. We made efforts to try to stave it off to the extent that we could. We were not very effective necessarily in influencing Indian decisions on these sets of issues, but to the extent that we could we could wade in, we did so.

The interests in Indian testing fluctuated. It was very clear that the BJP saw this as essentially a way of doing several things -- of requiring their commitment to Indian greatness, to move India from having tested "a peaceful nuclear explosion" to a position where it had been able to perfect a number of weapons because it conducted a series of explosions or a number of explosions at one time. It was also clear that the Indian scientific establishment working around the nuclear program felt that it was important that they be able to demonstrate definitively that they had this capability -- they had succeeded. That line of thinking and political activity was going on in the background to press against the BJP. Then, the fairly recent BJP election success and a sense that this would be something that they could do to solidify their position domestically was driver or potential driver toward testing. It was domestically very popular, particularly among Hindu nationalists, but across the board in India. I would suspect not including the Muslim population but, nevertheless, you have to remember that one of the key leaders in the Indian nuclear program was a man who later became president of India who is himself a Muslim.

In any event, the Indian program fit in the concept of the BJP -- the notion that they would establish this kind of independent approach. Of course, very much in Indian minds was the notion that China had conducted a number of explosions. China was their principal rival in Asia they had long-standing, continuing, festering border disputes with China along the border between India and China in Tibet. That these somehow had to be rebalanced in the Indian mind - - that India and China couldn't be seen as a kind of struggle between states which were somehow vastly unequal in their strategic capabilities on the nuclear side was also important to demonstrate for some Indians.

All of that I think played into the discussions and the arguments. The Indians understood something about our surveillance capabilities and we were busy looking to put it this way in a thousand other directions. The Indians handled the security of the test problem extremely well. We did not get any advanced indication at all that this series was going to take place.

*Q: We were concerned but had we said, "OK, this is, even before the test took place sort of are they going to take place or oh hell there is not a lot we can do about it? But let's consider how we can put it together again after they do it.*

PICKERING: I think less so. We were caught by surprise. They didn't like the idea, I believe, that if we had significant advanced warning we would have deployed a great deal more effort. The Indian test caught us by surprise and so then we turned all of our effort on the Pakistani's and the Pakistani's as a result of the Indian tests were supremely resistance.

*Q: Because once you do that you...*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Well, I'll come to the Indian-China border problems and rivalry in a minute. I was wondering another development that was happening during your time. India was sort of a prime example but it was happening elsewhere what about the Internet, the computer revolution and all of that? I mean this was really sort of a remarkable development for India.*

PICKERING: Well that began when I was ambassador to India, but now we are talking about the time as under secretary so it had moved, progressed and matured. India was already by the late-1990s a major player in the development of software, particularly. The Indians were extremely successful in developing basically the knowledge-based aspect of the Internet, not with the hardware. Both Indians in Silicon Valley and then Indians in India took advantage of the fact that India had produced and was continuing to produce a significant number of high quality software providers. India had a long tradition of high quality mathematics which was perfected in their excellent top-level universities and engineering schools.

It was interesting that years before in the '50s and the '60s, the international community had decided to cooperate together with the Indians on technical and scientific education. Each of the major assistance players developed, in effect, an Indian institute of technology in a major city. We developed Kanpur and linked it with high-quality universities in our country. The idea was to produce three, four, five, six centers of excellence in science education and by analogy certainly in science research. This was enormously helpful. The technology institutes were applied technology, but there was an Indian institute of science in Bangalore as well which produced pure scientists so that India was turning out then very significant numbers of scientists, mathematicians and engineers. Some were in lower quality educational institutions but the top of the heap was at the IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology) like Kanpur and you are speaking about cooperation with schools like Cal Tech and MIT and so on. Out of the population of a billion people there were certainly people of enormous capacity who managed to find their way, swim their way, up through the Indian educational system and come out at the top. India had a lot of these capabilities.

It would be interesting to talk a little bit too now about some of the border issues. I had talked about some of these at the time we discussed the period when I was ambassador to India. But when I was under secretary I continued to be concerned as I continue now to be concerned that we are not developing our opportunities to be as influential as we might be with the Indians and

the Pakistani's on the question of dealing with their differences along the borders which are the flash points for potential future conflict.

When I came in as under secretary in '97, it quickly became apparent that the border areas, particularly in Kashmir, were in some special kind of tension and turmoil. There had been and continued to be frequent artillery firings on both sides. The Indians always believed that the artillery firings were, in fact, way of Pakistan providing cover for infiltration of individuals in the what the Indians called terrorist organization, Lashkar-e-Taiba and others, who were then coming into Kashmir to cause local mayhem through terrorist operations. The way to get these people over the border after they were trained in camps either in Pakistan or southern Afghanistan Pakistan was using artillery barrages either to divert Indian attention from or provide cover for their transit routes. The Indians in return fired back and these things tended to grow and get out of hand. There existed a telephone channel between the Operations Chiefs of both forces. However, it had been used too often to promote an objective of one side at the expense of the other that it had become suspect, and degraded in its usefulness to control and eliminate this kind of behavior. We made an effort during this period, a quiet one with both sides, to reduce and try to eliminate this artillery firing. We hoped it would be an example of a way to try and put the quietus on a set of activities that ran the risk of getting out of hand. We did this by phone. I called frequently the Pakistan Foreign Minister Sattar with whom I have been in school at Fletcher. I also spoke with Lalit Mansingh, then the Indian Foreign Secretary who had been Ambassador in Washington. This was particularly true after the nuclear tests had once again proved that each side had some nuclear capability. Kargil, of course, intervened in all of this, but even before Kargil for a while we were able...

*Q: Kargil, can you explain it?*

PICKERING: Well Kargil was an effort in the spring of 2000, I think, that the Pakistani's launched in high altitude positions along the line of control in Kashmir north of the town of Kargil. The Indians occupied the positions in the summer and abandoned them for the winter and then went back in next the summer. These were nominally continually under Indian control but at very high altitudes and uninhabitable in the winter. In the spring the Pakistani's took an early opportunity, before the Indians reoccupied the posts, to occupy them themselves. They first claimed that they were occupied by volunteers or insurgents and were not under their control, but the truth was we saw very quickly that a number of Pakistani military organizations were engaged in occupying these positions, The Indians drove them off with fierce effort and it produced a serious confrontation in and around Kargil. It did not spread; both sides had the wisdom to keep the battle contained. As he was about to lose these positions Nawaz Sharif on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2000 came to see President Clinton. President Clinton told him that they had to get out and he wouldn't have our support unless he did. He did agree to exit. But that led to tensions with the military which he then attempted to exploit. At the time when his army chief, Musharraf, was on an overseas visit he shut down the airport on his return in an effort to try to remove him. The military, of course, then moved to take control. Nawaz Sharif emerged as the ex-prime minister and Pervez Musharraf emerged as the new leader.

But before Kargil, and then after Kargil, we attempted to try to shut down this uncontrolled and seemingly mindless artillery firing across the border, which lead to confrontations and people being killed.

*Q: Did you have the impression that some of those Kashmir border stuff was...people were trapped in this nationalistic confrontation that really didn't advance any cause at all but it's one of these things that it's hard to extract yourself from it.*

PICKERING: It is a traditional triumph of domestic politics over long-term national interest. But it was in each case very much the issue, There was no question at all that the Indians had a very strong sense that the international positions going back to the '50s at the UN, did not favor them. So they wanted little or no international involvement from any quarter.

*Q: No plebiscite or....*

PICKERING: No referendum, no reference to UN Security Council resolutions. The Pakistanis emerged with a much smaller share of Kashmir proper than they would like They wanted at a minimum control over the Muslim majority in the Valley of Kashmir around Srinagar, They attempted to try to extract that from the Indians, as much as they possibly could by using insurgency in Kashmir supported from Pakistan. They were prepared to use violence in the form of infiltrators and organizations that the Indians quite rightly termed as terrorists to seek to create pressures on the Indians to relinquish their control of Kashmir.

The Indians in the meantime put huge reinforcements in the area on the ground, all kinds of police forces and constabularies and military to control the situation. But it was not easily controlled and as a result continued to be a point of tension. The Indian pressures on us not to become involved in any way through trying to broker talks, mediate or facilitate were significant. We were trying to build a stronger relationship with India. Any efforts on Kashmir or the borders were considered by the Indians as directly contrary negatively and seen at State to contrary to our short term interest in building our relationship because they produced negative reactions and neuralgia among Indians.

*Q: Is this because they felt they had a weak case or...*

PICKERING: They just didn't think that the case the international community would promote would result in anything other than some weakening of their current position. Because the controlled the territory, they were in the catbird seat. They controlled most but not all of the most important parts of pre-partition Kashmir. The Pakistani's controlled a very small part and wanted in effect to bring the Muslim population dominated areas at a minimum into Pakistan. They were prepared to use military force because they said the international community won't put pressure on India to do what is "right here in terms of the ethnic divisions." These became part and parcel of the tensions. We, in effect, told the Pakistani's over a period of time that they should cut out the use of military force, but we were not able to provide them with an alternative formula to help them achieve what their objective or perhaps more importantly settle the problem diplomatically with the other side. They saw that view as a desertion because over the years in return for Pakistan's participation with the United States on the right side of the Cold War they

felt they had reason to expect U.S. support to do the right thing with respect to India in Kashmir. That continued with Afghanistan where we had to rely heavily on Pakistan after 2002 for access for our forces. India over that entire period tended to feel that its primacy in terms of size, democracy and position in the subcontinent was never really recognized by the United States. The United States always tried to equate India and Pakistan, keep a balance and never do anything with one that was not somehow requited with the other.

The U.S. refused to tilt historically -- each side considered that as a tilt toward the other which did not lessen the complications! In the Clinton administration and now in the Bush administration, of course, the tilt moved for a while to India. But with Afghanistan and the Taliban, the tilt has now shifted back. We are in the awful position of obviously needing Pakistani very badly while Pakistan knows this and can take advantage of it which in turn influences negatively our relations with India. Pakistan is, in fact, moving to shred itself through the emergence of a domestic Taliban fostered by the Afghan Taliban it has supported. There isn't much we can do about it. At the same time our old tilt toward India and recognizing Indian preeminence, as the major power in the region, is somewhat clouded by this kind of ambivalent but necessary relationship we feel we have to maintain with Pakistan over Afghanistan.

*Q: Were the Indians ever when there were complaints and all look them coldly in the eye and say where were you during the Cold War?*

PICKERING: Well I think I mean yes and no. We certainly provided India enormous support after the Chinese in '62 put major military pressure on the border...

*Q: Six foot two or something like that?*

PICKERING: That helped build a better relationship with India for a few years. The Indians also felt beholden to the Soviet Union in its efforts to counter balance China. It became a very important relationship to them. The Indians suddenly saw that they could obtain tremendous military support from the Soviet Union for barter. They couldn't arm themselves with the west without paying for it in cash, except for our assistance to India, which was limited in the end but came as a result of the Chinese pressure on India in '62. So the Indians sort of said, "Well you know, the Russians here are going to give us MiGs for tea and tanks for tea and the west is not. So where are we?" So they viewed this situation as "OK, we go with the people who are prepared to help us and the Soviets certainly were favorably inclined. The Russians saw India as a way of kind of hemming in China with that serious effort.

*Q: There's a Syria, China, Russia, American corridor I mean all...*

PICKERING: Exactly I mean all those cards were being played in a fourhanded bridge game with each side having an interest. If you didn't understand this and we tended to see India as a kind of democracy but a mild one and one consumed with its own interests and, we didn't spend a lot of time trying to understand Indian interests and much less accommodate them. We maintained over those years what one would call a minimal relationship built around an AID program of some significance. It kept our hand in India, but it was long term and a fairly remote influence on then current Indian foreign policy.

We had at the same time programs of science and technology cooperation which the Indians valued, but it was nothing in compared with what happened with respect to the Soviet Union and it's very strong influence, It was based on providing military equipment across the Indian military and steel mills and other things. The Indians up until the collapse of the Soviet Union saw the Soviet Union as a kind of anchor in this multifaceted conflict inter action in which some how they never could get going with the U.S. The U.S. always had reservations. The U.S. always saw the Indians as pandering to the Soviets and the Indians all saw their salvation in London's School of Economics advocated policies of socialism. Some of those were failures in terms of their own efforts to develop. So the light went on in 1990 and '91 when suddenly the Soviet Union turned out to be not ten feet tall but economically at least just a few inches tall, that the Indians suddenly looked elsewhere...

*Q: London School of Economics.*

PICKERING: The London school approach as they had adopted it, wasn't helping them develop. Leaders like Manmohan Singh came along and said maybe we should go to a more open economy -- open up and expand the private sector which had been pretty robust. By then, they were the world's tenth largest economy in spite of themselves. So you had this interesting combination which has prevailed for the last fifteen years in India of more opening up of the economy and in many ways of shifting the balance more in the direction of the United States because their choices were really a failed Soviet Union, a rising China which was in competition, or a distant United States. The United States showed some interest in moving in their direction.

The tests were, of course, a burst of what one would call counter intuitive activity, but once again with the Hindu Nationalist Party they didn't want to seem to be captured by anybody. It was a way of celebrating their national independence and the Indians calculated they could live through the difficulty with the United States. To some extent the whole hang over of that period attaches now to the U.S-Indian nuclear deal.

So as much as there are interests in pursuing that and seeing it as a new phase of a new relationship on the one hand, many see that as an old resurgence of bad India on the other.

*Q: Well Tom I was thinking you and I are of a generation and a name all of a sudden escapes me but it will spring to your mind the defense minister of India...*

PICKERING: Oh yes, absolutely, yes.

*Q: ...during the Korean War and all this.*

PICKERING: Krishna...

*Q: Krishna Menon wasn't it?*

PICKERING: yes.

*Q: Who looked evil, I mean and obviously sort of looked down upon the Americans and sort of it set the tone for a couple generations.*

PICKERING: Well the one encounter I had with Krishna Menon I found him an absolutely charming guy; I was a very junior officer. Ron Spiers with whom I was working closely knew him fairly well and we met in the context of some visit he paid to the UN in Geneva. He was a little more solid than I thought he would be. It was interesting because this was one example of a guy who had developed over the years some close relationships with Americans, but at the same time used the brick bat, the cricket paddle to enhance his own relationship at home.

I never finished telling you about border management and stopping the shelling if only perhaps for a time. I would get information from our intelligence community about what was going on. The then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Sattar, was a graduate school classmate from Fletcher. I would call him and say that we see this happening and could they please stop it. The Indian Foreign Secretary, Lalit Mansingh, had been Ambassador in Washington. I would also be in touch with him. If we felt the Indians could be helpful in stopping the shelling, we also asked them to do so. Now these two gentlemen were not exactly the right address for instant action -- that would have been the military. On the Pakistani side they were clearly their own boss. If the shelling took place to facilitate an infiltration attempt it would be harder to stop. The Pakistani military would be working to assist ISI (Inter Services Intelligence). The Indians generally knew this. If I could get the Pakistanis to stop, then we had a good change to bring the Indian along. It would not work the other way with the Indians feeling they were responding to the Pakistanis. It was more complicated at times because the Indians would somehow get word that an attempt was coming and begun shelling to pre-empt the Pakistani move.

After several rounds we were able to keep on the pressure and get the process halted. The Pakistanis were not happy that we saw the infiltrations as the major driver. While they denied it, the information was pretty good. I believe we got the shelling stopped for months at a time. The concern was that it would otherwise blow up.

There was no US official view on what kind of a scenario might set off a process of both sides considering the use of a nuclear weapon. The Pakistanis I thought wanted the weapon in part to offset India's conventional superiority which they had demonstrated in three wars. India referred more often in public to concerns about China to justify its nuclear program.

My sense was that Pakistan would think about such use under several circumstances. One would be if a large unit, a corps or several divisions, were surrounded and likely to have to surrender. What was particularly worrisome was the possibility that the corps commander would have authority to use such weapons and might even have rocket or artillery launched weapons under command. The other circumstance would be when a large city like Lahore which was not far from the frontier would be surrounded and have to capitulate. The Indians did not seem interested in taking cities with their large Muslim population. Pakistanis were not convinced that they would not seek to take a city or maybe restructure in a large way the border line between them to their advantage.



*Q: Well did you see going back to the information age and the changing did you see this acting to work on the politico development in India because in a way the more communication you have I would think the harder to get too religious or too nationalistic or maybe not?*

PICKERING: No, we over time and Frank Wisner managed very ably and then Dick Celeste; relationships got along OK with the BJP. The BJP had its own difficulties in ruling the country. It had alignment difficulties and coalition difficulties. The Congress Party had, after 45 or 50 years of almost absolute dominance of the Indian political scene, suddenly seen new things happening in India. India was no longer an absolutely totally committed one-party state. The Congress Party which had led the country to independence was no longer an absolutely unquestioned leader. India began to divide in its political relationships. Two or three things were happening all these years.

One is that local parties were growing up particularly in some of the minority language areas. In Tamil Nadu in the south you had the development of strong local parties in the Tamil speaking area, for example. But you also had what one would call stratified differences, the Untouchables, the Dalits, the Harijans, were developing their own parties particularly in Uttar Pradesh, the largest of the states. These grew in enormous significance and so suddenly from a situation in which you had almost absolute Congress Party ascendancy, with rare interludes of outside party leadership, you had a division in the country.

The next step was that you had a necessity for coalition government as opposed to pure party government with the loss in members to the new parties by the old parties and particularly the Congress. As a result, you had strictures and limitations and you indeed had domestic requirements that began to determine how India leaders would behave with respect to major issues- all as a price for forming or maintaining a coalition. India fits in my view as a continental country and continental countries tend anyway to be dominated by domestic issues and domestic issues almost always trump foreign policy questions where there are serious ideological and political requirements to do so. Countries like Russia, China, India, the United States, Australia and Canada are have these large land areas, tremendous diversity and tend to operate on the basis of being more inward or domestically oriented. Just their size and circumstances if dominating a land mass dictates that.

India has some of those same attributes. India doesn't have a common national language but is able to speak within itself sufficiently clearly as to keep things together. India has 700 or 800 million rural poor; more than 1600 identified languages. They have enormous voting strength but are in many ways relegated to a second order relationship to the impact of the communications system and the media. The result is how do you get to them to vote for you is very different than what we do in modern societies.

*Q: Well you know you have this interesting thing. Right now in America I'd say all our attention is focused on the growth of China and huge population but in a way China seems to have huge feet of clay. That is how to deal with this huge population and it sort of seems to me reverting to almost a kind of Communist warlordism or something. But then you have India, which in a way has the same situation but seems to not have our attention but sort of the democratic impulses*

*seem to be leveling out some of the problems that the Chinese really haven't focused. Were we thinking in those terms?*

PICKERING: No, and I think that sense is still not very clear. One is that it is not very clear yet how and in what way China will organize itself politically to deal with the economic realities it has created. It is a country which is still got major single party dominance of political heights and critical economic decisions on the one hand and the other it has been able to generate around itself a much more open and competitive economy.

India is moving roughly in the same direction. It has a democratic system, but is it a democratic system at a very low order of development. It has what one would call significant amounts of authoritarianism. It rests in the former way of management, if I can put it this way, of political life and the economy, which still is disappearing. But India has lurched in the same direction as China and is trying to open itself up. The two are quite different in that the Chinese have shown an enormous capacity to move very rapidly in what one would call the statistical measure of their success in production and the generation of goods and services to earn foreign exchange and expand exports. India is moving along much more slowly but seemingly inexorably in the same direction. The Indians look at a major bench mark for themselves when their population exceeds that of China. I don't think that's really anything that one could find as enormously advantageous, but for India and Indians it's seemingly part of the race as who will be the largest. Of course, being the world's most populous country is from their perspective at least an arrival point if not one that anyone would necessarily think useful.

*Q: Aspire to yeah. What was happening on the border between China and India? In a way you think about the war they had there. I remember one of the problems was that when they were trying to fight we were delivering weapons and the Kozmuline was frozen and all. This is the '60s but it's one of those non...*

PICKERING: I think what happened was that there were long-standing differences as to where the border actually was located. Demarcation was rough and ready and the British perceptions of where they left the Indian frontier and the Indian perception of where that was were not too different. But there was not a lot of effective control. The Chinese side had a different view historically about where that should be; each side obviously taking its greatest historical point of expansion in areas, which were not heavily populated, as being basically the true frontier.

By '62, I think the Chinese were very concerned by what they saw as the Indians abetting American activity in Tibet. They did not believe such actions were in their interest. They saw American activity over China during that period when the Korean War settled down but they still were deeply concerned by American infiltration. So the Chinese took the opportunity, if we could call it that, to deliver a blow, to teach a lesson much as they tried with the Vietnamese back after the war ended in the mid '70s. I think it was characteristic of the Chinese to uncharacteristically lash out, but they wanted to teach the Indians a lesson and put them in their place and they were willing to take the risks of doing that; so they did. We left it to the Indians to decide how to respond as we should have.

The Indians were not prepared to man that border militarily. They had few troops equipped for mountain fighting. Their army was not deployed in the region and so for a period of time the Indians completely reoriented their military establishment, created a number of new mountain divisions. Those are still involved in a very heavy deployment along the border. After the initial fighting which the Indians lost and the Chinese had occupied advance positions. They then went back to a period of non-contact and then actually increasingly diplomacy and over the years since the sixties have attempted to try to negotiate the frontier.

The real difficulty is the Indians are not in terms of occupation on the ground in a strong enough position to assert their minimal objectives. The Chinese are not in a position to be generous enough to provide for those. In the meantime, however, increasingly each side has turned to the notion that diplomacy will have to solve this. If it can't be solved militarily each side is seeing that there is no real long term interest in the two of them fighting. Each side has basically been prepared to recognize that the status quo achieved by the military position is not going to satisfy the other side one way or the other. The Chinese would like to stay where they are but the Indians don't and won't accept it.

*Q: Was there any talk about India playing the Tibet card as far as upsetting China or something, you know, doing something?*

PICKERING: You mean recently?

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: The answer is no, I think everybody understood that those days were over and that there was not a Tibet card. Of course, the Chinese had massively reinforced their position in Tibet and moved large numbers of Han Chinese into Tibet linking it up by then -- they were building roads and a railroad. Everybody saw that factor quite clearly, despite the fact that the Dalai Lama was still in exile in Darjeeling in north India. That was not something that was immediately going to be changed either by negotiation or otherwise. The Chinese were not going to turn loose of Tibet and we have adopted a view that Tibet is part of China, we don't say it very loudly or very long, but we believe the Tibetans should enjoy autonomous rights in their own region.

*Q: During the time you were undersecretary how were military relations with Indians? You know they had a lot of this Soviet equipment and I'm not sure whether updating them or what was happening there?*

PICKERING: I think we began to have a few military exercises together. That has, of course, increased during the period of the Bush administration. But just the beginning of being able to hold military exercises was quite a change. There was not a question at all that the Indians had been helpful for a period of time at facilitating our access to Iraq in 1991. They certainly were. While that did not continue, the Indians also have made it clear since that they were not going to provide forces for Iraq -- in 2003. In the interim period the Indians did become quite forthcoming in providing peacekeeping forces in Somalia and to some extent in other areas in competition with Pakistan.

*Q: Yeah, Pakistan is sort of the rent a battalion thing.*

PICKERING: So is Bangladesh.

*Q: Uh huh.*

PICKERING: Interestingly enough, in a way that has not gotten a lot of attention, the Bangladeshis have also provided a fair amount of peacekeepers. A very large share of UN peacekeeping these days is from South Asia.

*Q: How about did the Indian Ocean or was there a water element to our relationship with India?*

PICKERING: Well there always was and the Indians saw the Indian Ocean as kind of *mare nostrum*.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: We saw the Indian Ocean as a place where we had an important interests with the access it provided to the Arabian peninsula, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, as well as of course Southeast Asia and Australia. The Indians never liked the base in Diego Garcia. We saw the Indian Ocean increasingly as a place which earlier we had ignored changing to one that suddenly provided us with an enormously amount of access to big portions of the Middle East and to other areas around the world where we had strategic interests. Now we and the Indians see the Indian Ocean as an area of cooperation. We have not been basically in a denial of the Indians a primary role or a premier role in the ocean, even though we maintain probably much more military strength there than they do. Over recent years, the Indians have provided military cooperation at sea through the Straits of Malacca and even into the South China Sea with Japan and others in the region.

*Q: They have pirate problems.*

PICKERING: Serious pirate problems in the Straits of Malacca.

*Q: Off Somalia and Indonesia.*

PICKERING: Yeah and it was very interesting that apparently the Malaysian navy has deployed three ships today to Somalia to protect their own country's assets there.

*Q: Things are changing. How are we doing for time?*

PICKERING: I think we can go another five minutes.

*Q: OK then let's turn to Sri Lanka. The Tamil Singhalese situation seems to wax and wane but mostly wax I guess. But how was it during your time there?*

PICKERING: Well, when I was there I paid at least one visit to Colombo. It was clear that we had some hope of the Norwegian mediation moving the process ahead. However, it was also very clear that at the time I was there, Mrs. Kumaratunga was the president and Prabhakaran was the head of the LTTE, the Tamil group. They were very far apart and that they were not very likely to come together. There was a young man by the name of Wickremesinghe who was in opposition to Mrs. Kumaratunga who later became briefly prime minister. Under his lead something was patched up with the LTTE, which now has fallen apart. We were trying to encourage the government in Colombo to tone down excesses and see whether, in fact, it could open up more to a negotiating exercise. We had almost no relationship or contacts with the LTTE (the Norwegians had made some efforts without much success) and it was very difficult to see who and how anyone could influence Prabhakaran. He had developed a very violent terrorist aspect to his campaigns and had not succumbed militarily to the pressure from Colombo. In fact, in some cases he had expanded territory around Jaffna -- the areas that he had controlled in the north so we saw it as a long-standing conflict.

We had an interest in trying to get it settled and we paid some attention to it. We tried to give the Norwegians some help. They had quietly tried over a period of years to establish enough contacts to bring the parties together around a settlement, but with no long term success.

*Q: Was this purely a Sri Lankan generated Tamil movement or did we see any other organizations or anything getting involved in it?*

PICKERING: There was no question at all that they had their lines back into the Tamil's in south India and to some extent to the Indians themselves who had previously sent a peacekeeping force which went on the rocks. But the Indians had it when they could not make any progress. It was the Tamil extremists in south India who assassinated Rajiv Gandhi so that there wasn't what I would call a serious Indian interest in this even from a defensive point of view. There was not much in the way of Indian capacity to move things. They sort of took a kind of semi arms length view "We've been there, we've done that, we've run our ship on those rocks enough times not to want to go again." Over time, as the Tamil party became important in building and maintaining a Congress Party coalition in power, the Indians did play a slightly larger role in seeing whether the fighting could be stopped and the Tamils treated reasonably by the Sinhala majority.

It was also clear that there was serious Indian sympathy with trying to find a solution to the problem. They were just not in a position to exert a great deal of influence. They didn't have an overwhelming amount of influence. The fact that some of the lines of this led back into their own country were difficult and embarrassing. They attempted to try to minimize that aspect of the issue. They were never able entirely to take the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka out of the minds of the Tamil's in south India and Colombo...

*Q: The Cubans in Miami.*

PICKERING: Yes, maybe not as significant as that, but Colombo was never able also to see the problem without seeing an Indian role, positive or negative, from their perspective. India was and remains important to that issue.

*Q: One last question about the Indian military. I mean they may have been supplied by the Soviet Union, what was happening sort of with their equipment? Were they getting the latest things from Russia or what?*

PICKERING: Well I think they always got what we would call as the latest minus. Some of it was because they couldn't afford first class items. Some of it was because the Russians, as we do, don't provide the absolutely first line material and some of it was the question of price. But they did get good tanks; the real question was were they tropicalized. They tended to be less commodious and comfortable inside, and maybe less technically up to date, but very solid and serviceable.

The Indians had an awful lot of problems with the MiG 21 and still do. They had a large number of them, but over the years they've lost several hundred pilots to accidents. They had problems in maintaining them and in flying them and these were seen as a serious difficulty. The Indians are in the course of trying to renew their fighter fleet or a very large share of it in large part because of this problem with the MiG 21.

*Q: What was the problem with the MiG 21?*

PICKERING: Well I don't know. I think it was an early generation fighter probably less easy to fly, more unforgiving and harder to maintain.

*Q: We had the same problem with the Star Fighter.*

PICKERING: F-104s yeah.

*Q: F-104s.*

PICKERING: We and the Germans.

Q: In Germany. OK Tom well I guess we will stop here and we'll pick this up the next time and we'll turn over toward farther along toward Burma, Thailand and all of that. Great.

*Q: Today is the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2008. Tom before we turn geographically over to the Burma thing I'm not sure I asked you before did I about the rule during the time this would be what '96-2000 about?*

PICKERING: I think '97 yes.

*Q: Did the Dalai Lama come up? I think with China but we might...*

PICKERING: Yes it did with China and Tibet, What we attempted to do without recalling any specific incidents is certainly engage ourselves with him, but to try to do it in a way that was as low key in terms of potential confrontation with China as we could. We certainly stood in the direction that there should be conversations and things of that sort; none of which had opened up as they have now. That was the sum and substance of it, if I can put it in a nutshell. I didn't spent

a lot of time on it and I don't recall any particular incidents right now from which I could give you any vignettes as to what was going on.

*Q: But you weren't faced with any significant Free Tibet rule or lobbying?*

PICKERING: Well we were. There was a lobby out there and it's important and people paid attention to the Dalai Lama when he came. We attempted to do so within the context of the fact that we had a very important, developing relationship with China and that it was not going to be hazarded by what we did with the Dalai Lama. It was an effort to maintain that balance.

*Q: Well let's go to Burma.*

PICKERING: Yes

*Q: From your perspective what were our interests and what were our concerns about Burma?*

PICKERING: Well I mean we had a charge in a half-baked relationship with the SLORC, the military government. We certainly were very supportive of Aung San Suu Kyi. Madeleine Albright had a special interest in this part because she was a woman and part because she was in a battle over being able to requite the results of the election in her favor and in part because her rights were being contravened in a very flagrant way. As I remember, we were able to send her messages and have contacts through our embassy in Rangoon (Yangon) from time to time, but even that was limited. We certainly used the opportunity for public expressions of support when that seemed to be appropriate.

I think about that time a Malaysian, who had been my colleague in New York, Razali Ismail, was appointed by the secretary general of the UN to start a dialogue. He was to see if he could help move things ahead. He was a good choice because he was a clever and hardworking diplomat who had good ASEAN credentials through his Malaysian citizenship and service and his Mahathir backing were sometimes a mixed blessing. Of course none of that ever got anywhere. I think he finally gave up in frustration after a few years; that may have all happened under Bush I or split over into Bush II. We were certainly not going to go to war over Burma, but we were very disturbed. It ranked very low on our list of acceptable regimes, if I can put it that way.

*Q: Did the drug cultivation there cause problems?*

PICKERING: Sure it was obviously also part of the problem. Also their corrupt activities were part of the problem. It's a long way away from the United States and formed only a very small part of our dialogue with India and with China. Those two states, particularly China, had the most influence in those days. China was being very careful to guard its influence in Burma without at the same time hanging out as a kind of public advocate for a regime.

*Q: Well then over to Thailand. How stood Thailand at the time?*

PICKERING: Well I don't really remember a lot. We had a series of leaders in Thailand and I really never heavily focused on it. There may have been a few individual problems that came as

under secretary. The Thai ambassador here again had been a colleague at the UN, but we didn't spend a lot of time together and I don't know, in fact, that we had any particular big issues that came up to my level.

*Q: Who was your Far Eastern?*

PICKERING: Stanley Roth. The Far Eastern stuff was principally centered on China, Japan, and Korea to some extent and Taiwan. The other issues came along and I don't know that after the '96 crisis in the Taiwan Straits, which I was not involved in when we deployed a carrier group when it looked like the mainland was going to rattle missiles or do worse. Things there had come to more of a head. But I wouldn't say there was a large and intensive focus on Southeast Asia; the bureau, handled that well and things went along well.

*Q: Did you find yourself at all pussyfooting around the Taiwan relationship?*

PICKERING: Pussyfooting is probably too nice a word. We had a very difficult set of problems because on the one hand there was a lobby, it was then a Republican Congress and the Taiwan Relations Act had just gone through. There were serious efforts to amend that on the part of the Republicans to "try to strengthen" it in terms of U.S.-military support for Taiwan. We were not about to withdraw all our support for Taiwan; we were not about to over emphasize the military aspects. To try to keep it in balance we were very strong on a one China policy. I think during the course of the time we saw in the House later on in the administrations some votes in favor of Taiwan objectives centered around independence and recognition of that and membership as an independent state in the United Nations, all of which would have driven the mainland nuts.

But at the same time, we were coming out of a situation in which it was clear that the mainland had gotten quite excessive in its saber rattling. As a result, Taiwan had run up against a brick wall with us. That tended for a while, to cloud our relations with the mainland half way to totally souring them. But it gave us kind of a nasty and difficult issue. Over a period of time we consistently emphasized dialogue and moved questions ahead. Their continuing contacts with Taiwan were necessary to keep a sense of perspective there, We hadn't yet gotten into the phase of the new democratic party in Taiwan which had been much more leaning forward on independence. So in a sense while the Kuomintang was in charge in those days, it was not the favorite party of Beijing the way it is now for its non-independence stand. There were clearly great sensitivities on both sides, around which we had to maneuver very delicately.

*Q: I won't ask what they were but I assume we were...*

PICKERING: They were the same ones that we have now, that the people on the mainland felt that sooner or later Taiwan would become once again part of the one China not just in theory but in practice and were headed in that direction. At the same time, they didn't think that talks were going to go anywhere. The history of talks was fairly checkered and at one point they seemingly had an agreement but each had different interpretations of what 'One China' meant. The PRC was not ready to renounce the use of force, but over time and gradually began to operate along the lines that it had done so at least for the present.



*Q: Mandarin and Cantonese or something like that.*

PICKERING: No it was a much more important geographic issue -- whether it was in Beijing or Taipei and what it meant for their future. It was also, I think, the kind of sensitive issue which in those days certainly rose to the point being one of the two or three areas where we could have experienced a military outbreak of some proportions. In '96, it got close. I don't know how close because it's hard to say to reconstruct all of that. Of course, coming in on top of that we had the Belgrade bombing which was another difficult issue to handle in respect to China.

*Q: You might explain and go over that.*

PICKERING: I went over all of that I think.

*Q: I think we have, yeah.*

PICKERING: I think so; we've probably got more of that on the tape than you want.

*Q: The Chinese embassy in Belgrade.*

PICKERING: So all of that I think added into the relationship. During this time we worked closely with the Australians on East Timor and persuaded them they had several options to use to take a major share of the military burden with others but not with the United States. We agreed to provide them technical help, we agreed and did provide them what I would call at least symbolic presence on the ground so they knew they were not alone. We had a kind of back-up role if things got difficult, but they did a remarkably good job particularly in being able to provide military forces and to handle that problem without a lot of bloodshed and mayhem.

It was a difficult problem and it seesawed back and forth and it was not a certain thing from the very beginning. Of course, it was extremely difficult on the Indonesian side where I think Megawati was then in charge, and the military had very significant influence. A lot of them had been very much involved in what one can only call gross abuses in former Portuguese Timor, since part of Indonesia which for historical reasons alone wanted out and where over a period of time with some help from our friends and allies in the UN, the people in former Portuguese Timor were able to assert their right to become a separate state. It went through the UN, and gradually the Indonesians receded. It was very messy in terms of the handover. There was an Australian peace force presence to try to keep things under control and there was certainly guerrilla fighting and sporadic attempts at extreme oppression from various sides of the process. It has now kind of evolved itself in to a small state in the region, but it attracted a lot of attention and a lot of focus was on it.

*Q: I had a couple sessions with Peter Galbraith who was out there.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: How was Peter Galbraith because he's a very activist because he has a partisan...*

PICKERING: Peter is a super activist and Peter in this particular issue took a very strong position in favor of separating Timor from Indonesia. It was the general direction in which we were proceeding. We probably had to show more interest in the fact that Indonesia was a very large, very significant country of very importance to us which differentiated Peter's position from ours. So the handling of what went on and the relationships and the arrangements had to take into account that the United States had a series of difficult and mixed equities in the issue. I think Peter would have tended to say, "Well, we were being overly prissy and overly solicitous." But in fact there were some serious question too with the rest of Indonesia, a large country, a large population, significant resources, significant American commercial interests and significant strategic interests.

But it lead to a souring of U.S. relations with Indonesia which were not really in anyway reversed until the horrible tragedy of the tsunami and the fact was that we were able to respond very, very quickly with American military resources, to provide relief and to do so in a way that helped turn around some of the continuing serious animosity on the part of others toward the United States.

*Q: You know, just from your perspective at that time how do we feel about Indonesia? Here is a huge country spread out all over the place with very diverse areas and we are talking about half an island becoming independent. That must have put strains elsewhere.*

PICKERING: It did, well it put strains on that part of our relationship. There were plenty of people around the world who didn't believe in the breakup of independent countries despite the fact of ethnic differences. We were going through a similar and nasty difficult process in the former Yugoslavia. It was clear that things were changing and were going to change. It was very clear that the large majority of the Timorese were not in favor of it. Peter and others, in terms of creating a very solid lobby in this direction, were there and they were listened to and heard if not totally heeded in terms of what they wanted to see done when. But over a period of time through a combination of international pressure and Indonesian accommodation to that in a fairly significant way, but in a very difficult way, independence came. Of course, the Indonesian military have in a sense a very important role to play in the country and they were not really ready to have some of their major leaders sacrificed on the altar of Timorese independence for what were, I think, clearly some very bad abuses over a long period of what could only be termed as Indonesian occupation.

*Q: It does point out again we run across this again how the government has to play this role of fighting battles on several fronts including just the international situation which we have to look at that but then you have these groups in the United States. This is going way back in Biafra for example. We have again and again these groups, which sometimes can mobilize considerable clout.*

PICKERING: We go back to the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; we had filibustering expeditions to Central America.

*Q: Absolutely, in the '70s and so.*

PICKERING: You go back to the 1840s in Mexico and before that. No there was no question at all that the United States in terms of the way in which individuals in this country accept to deal with foreign countries and we had an expansionist outlook. We had the party of the French Revolution laid after our own independence in this country and the party that despite the revolution had a long term and enduring interest in the UK. So historically we have always had these currents, these ebbs and flows of people, opinion, influence and ideas and our country in favor for or against certain foreign activities. I well remember because I was a young kid in the period of the '30s and the isolationist enterprise and stay out of the war was organized. Of course, we had a very large amount, people forget, of German-American sympathy with fascism.

*Q: "Ya vol."*

PICKERING: Yeah, with fascism, "das bund", that came up. We had a Communist movement growing out of the adversity and depression of the '20s and '30s and the admiration for what they thought the Soviets were really doing. No, it's absolutely fascinating in this country where you're never far from those currents and it certainly as under secretary for secretary of state my calendar was filled with folks who had similar concerns.

I spent two fascinating years in Central America, we've talked about, and a very large share of that was dealing with the Washington groups that had special interests, very strong, but very heavily, I think quite rightly, human rights oriented groups deeply disturbed by what had been going on in El Salvador. They had deep feelings that we had somehow missed the boat to champion the kind of change in El Salvador that they would like to make. On the other hand, we had an equally deeply committed group, particularly among a number of senior White House staffers, who were very concerned that a combination of Cuba and Nicaragua were in effect going to take over El Salvador through the guerrilla movement, with which had very close ties. So that all came to a head and certainly what I had to deal with as ambassador there was a big set of problems. George Shultz didn't escape from his perch the necessity having to deal with those people.

*Q: Absolutely, I've had Tony Quainton talking about when he was ambassador to Nicaragua...*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: In a circle with the Maryknoll Sisters and all of a sudden they started praying for basically the demise of our president. Did you find as undersecretary this type of movement, you know, the Irish Americans, you can think of any group I mean the person to listen to sympathy at all?*

PICKERING: I think that happily the regional bureaus and some of the functional bureaus took up a lot of that. My predecessors had not established a pattern of being a listening ear for each of those groups. They were then used to coming to the bureaus where they had pretty ready access, if not total sympathy, and on occasion some would try to kind of bolt up toward me. I think my staff was helpful, not that I was un-sympathetic, it just was the pressing number of issues we had to deal with and the amount of time available in which to do it. It was very easy to understand their point of view; it was well established. It wasn't a question of education; it was a question of having to find what we believed to be the national interest in these questions and find the right

balance to protect that interest, which was clearly a set of national interests, which did not accord with everybody's particular point of view.

I found quickly over a period of time, particularly from the under secretary's perch that what was interesting, of course, was that a number of things were going on. One was that non-governmental organizations were assuming a much larger role in influencing what was going on and being successful in doing it. They were very valuable in that they brought together people of like mind, but they were also tremendously disruptive because by definition almost every one of them was a single interest group. Single interests have never been the patented solution for the United States to deal with a complex and multivalent world in which there are a lot of things going on, particularly things that in some cases may be morally reprehensible but have to be politically tolerated in some way in the absence of being to change them. We had to try to reconcile conflicting views and interests all the time. Single interest groups had they been put in charge of our relationships with a number of major countries would have, in fact, in my view destroyed our capacity to be influential. If we had permitted totality of our relations with a country like China to be dominated either by non-proliferation concerns or human rights concerns or other concerns, as important and as valid as they were, we would have lost the traction on developing a set of positive relationships with that country -- relationships which we can build on and which we could use as leverage to make progress on the negative issues.

So in a strange way but I think not too crazy, it was our ability to preserve a sense of current positive relations that gave us the basis for being much more influential on the negative questions. While people will always argue about this the notion -- that sanctions will produce the result that you want -- it is akin to the notion that I think wrong headedly, and that prevailed in the Bush administration, that military force will produce the outcomes you want. And will do so quicker, more completely and more efficiently than diplomacy about which they held very disparaging views. It was interesting that one came primarily from the left side of the political spectrum in the United States and the other came primarily from the right side. But they were both in a sense Americans, of good conscience, totally in search of magic bullets to deal with problems. They had become very much involved in issues like Iraq often for emotional reasons which tended then to become the end all and be all in their interest in American foreign policy. The rest of us had the national interest in mind, which was very broad in scope, it was obviously constantly changing nexus of thoughts and ideas. But we couldn't lightly abandon the whole series of very important activities including (A) not getting into the war with major countries that had nuclear weapons and (B) trying to promote a totality interest across the board. I think my thesis that with these big countries it is very valuable to know and understand what your positive agenda might be and what your positive goals might be and how they might serve the interest of what I would call diminishing the interest of the other side in promoting negative ideas. It is a significant way to move ahead. It's a little bit sophisticated, but it has to do with leveraging and diplomacy.

*Q: Well while we are on this subject did you find that the White House, National Security Council and the president, were more susceptible to sort of single interest things as a rule?*

PICKERING: No, I think not we were very lucky in a sense that Sandy Berger and Jim Steinberg and the team at the National Security Council had an appreciation for the breadth of our interest.

They came with a great deal of experience, and they were not in any way neophytes in the process. Of course they had their own concerns and they reflected in some cases in that administration what they thought should be the concerns of the Democratic party. But they were not, in my view, so unrealistic as to try to run roughshod over other concerns.

This was not totally true in all cases. Sandy was mesmerized by Sudan. He gave me hell over the phone one day for advocating that we reopen our Embassy after we had closed it on the basis of an intelligence point which had been shown to be erroneous. His argument was sort of why would you want to reward those 'no goods' by reopening the Embassy, and that people in the US would not understand doing that. I gave up temporarily on re-opening, but made it clear to the Embassy which had been relocated to Nairobi that I did not want a day to pass in Khartoum without at least once officer from the Embassy there.

The balance was always open and the balance was always in contention and the balance of course, as in many other cases, related to the details. They made a huge difference in the end. So small tweaks sometimes produced big actions, if not good results, in dealing with these issues. That was something that was usually part of the discussion in the process. I spent many more hours than I really would like to think about over in the situation room on many issues. We were always struggling for what's the right balance here. How do we keep these interests in mind? The right people were in the room, almost always, and the right people almost always spoke up and said, "Well, here is the consideration we have in mind, these are the things to keep our focus on."

State, tried its best with some success on that period to play a balanced role so that we were not what I would call single interest focused. Our friends at Defense of course had their set of interests. Some of the other domestic agencies when they joined in had their own set of interests. We also had to try to bring to the table what we thought were the wide range of conflicting interest. People like Dick Holbrooke at the UN where they were intimately involved in some of those questions and had a lot of experience played their own role in trying to get the process looked at in a broad gauge and intelligent way and try to figure out what was the right balance. Too often, of course, this led to stalemate. We didn't have an infinite amount of time. Of course, time changes all issues almost on a daily basis. So what was true yesterday was not necessarily going to be true tomorrow or a week from now, but these are all very interesting parts of what a government process has to contend with.

*Q: Well trying to capture the time. Today much is made during the Bush II administration of the power of the Pentagon and foreign policy where it has a huge State Department and can weigh in quite heavily on matters plus the fact that it has money. Did you feel that there was a pretty good balance during your time?*

PICKERING: I did. The Defense Department had some excellent people and some very broad gauged interests. Bill Cohen, Secretary of Defense, of course, came to the NSC meetings. He had his own long depth of experience, Walt Slocum with whom we dealt had deep experience and obviously not only just well versed in military questions but well versed in a lot of the political-military and some of the major political questions. The Joint Chiefs came in they felt constrained as uniformed officers to keep their advice to military matters. We looked to them very much to

give us not only military advice -- do this -- but to give us what we looked to as fairly dispositive views, fairly conclusive views on military planning for military operations. We asked them questions about why you are doing this or why you are doing that. They had a very good understanding of their rationale for what they were doing and why they were doing it. Sometimes for political reasons we asked them if they would move things here or there and they were generally capable of doing that.

We had long standing differences with the Defense Department over neos, non-combatant evaluation exercises, particularly in Africa where embassies and local cities with Americans present would get into difficulties over rebel movements moving in and things of that sort.

*Q: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia.*

PICKERING: Guinea Bissau, Somalia and places like that. They were not going to position evacuation forces permanently in the area, It often took them a while to get there particularly by sea, which turned out to be one of the major evacuation questions. They always wanted us to evacuate people very early by commercial air and we were loath to do that too early, if only to avoid making the situation worse by sending the signal that the US was getting out. American concerns about instability would play a role in affecting or even determining the political outcome. Then, of course, Defense was deeply concerned about who would pay for all of this. None of this, in a sense, was included operationally in their budget. The State Department had no real capacity to pay very much to make this happen. So it was a constant confrontation about who would do what to whom and when and under what circumstances.

*Q: But we got them out.*

PICKERING: We did. Happily there were no real tragedies that resulted from our inability effectively to deal with a particular neo. But it was often a close run thing. They wanted us to move very, very rapidly at the beginning, but in the end when we needed them very badly because we had waited a long period of time, they always had an operational time lapse to get there to do what had to be done. They got better at doing it and we got better at understanding where they were going although, we never had a perfect answer and I suspect we don't now.

*Q: OK, well I think was there anything while we are sort of going around the outer rim of Asia with Viet Nam was there anything going on during your time?*

PICKERING: Not much. Pete Peterson went out, a former Air Force pilot who had been a POW, as ambassador. He developed a great deal of sympathy and it was a remarkable thing because you had a human being who had obviously suffered greatly, but came back and had an entirely different view and was a remarkable ambassador.

*Q: He had a Vietnamese woman from Australia.*

PICKERING: That's true she came from Australia. He did a good job, we were just setting up relations, it was the beginning of the beginning with North and South Viet Nam now combined, but it was moving in a positive way. We had some visits, their ambassador was here, we had

reasonable opportunities to talk, there was not what I would call a hangover of massive acrimony and it was clear that the Vietnamese had begun a new course and were interested in a U.S. relationship particularly in the economic area.

*Q: Was the feeling that things were moving the right direction sort of domestically?*

PICKERING: Well it was a very strong feeling because they made it self-evident that they were Vietnamese and not anybody's tool. They were going to develop in their own way and that they were open to seeing our point of view and were open for us to play a role. They kind of looked forward to that. They wanted to build a relationship and they thought that while we were a long way away we could help counterweight some of the neighborhood -- they had a brief war with the Chinese and scratchy relations with them. They were interested in us in part for commercial and technology reasons; they saw that path to development as being very significant. They were interested in us because while we had been estranged and bitterly at war with them they also had what I would call, a kind of practical worldview focus on the United States; what we could do to be useful.

*Q: In a way I relate the experience of Americans going back there somewhat with Japan after World War II. I mean there is a sort of I won't even say a love-hate but there had been the hate but the love...Americans fit well into the...*

PICKERING: Well there was a sense on both sides that we had gone through a horrible tragedy together. There was no real value in not moving ahead. We were both realists. The future was that we had to get along together. It was maybe initially in Japan not true because of the occupation. That wasn't the case in Vietnam. The political and military balance was the other direction. We had gotten out, but on the other hand they saw that there was some long-term value in building this relationship. They saw that Americans were all not unable to move and shift their relationship; there was a fascination with the country. It was one of those remarkable things much like what one called the apotheosis of the Second World War in respect to both Germany and Japan.

*Q: OK Tom we'll stop here and we'll pick up relations with China and then Korea. One of the things I want to ask about Chinese was China seems to be in dealing with them you have to be very careful because all of a sudden they pull this nationalist button or something where they can get...*

PICKERING: Again this isn't the pull I think it's there.

*Q: I mean there is a Xenophobe or whatever you want to call it.*

PICKERING: Well culturally you have to understand their greatness and their own vision and probably historically; they don't drop that lightly.

*Q: When a billion people getting enraged...something that I found interesting I was interviewing...*

*Q: Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2008 with Tom Pickering. Tom we've been doing a real tour of the horizon, why don't we talk about well Asia? We've talked about up through India, Pakistan and all that South Asia. How much did you get involved in Asia itself, I mean in your role as undersecretary?*

PICKERING: I got involved in a few things. I can't say that it was steady state, A couple of periods of time we talked about China and Taiwan over in the National Security Council and the deputy's committee often in connection with a pending China visit or some potential dust up. Before that, of course, before I got there, we'd had a serious problem with China, we had deployment, I think, in '96 of a U.S carrier in the Taiwan Straits area. But Taiwan and Taiwan Straits remained a significant issue for the Chinese, for us and for people in Taiwan and that took a significant amount of time. It was not an area that I spent a lot of time on, but occasionally Stanley Roth who was the assistant secretary would ask me to help out on things.

I visited China a couple of times. I had an opportunity to see Qian Qichen, the former vice premier, but who is probably in terms of the Chinese succession of leaders with foreign policy responsibilities came after Zhou Enlai in terms of his longevity and his esteem and his rank and the situation. I saw Liu Hua Zhou who was the party person on a couple occasions and saw people in the foreign ministry. On one occasion that obviously was the most interesting and challenging we have probably talked about it was when the U.S. accidentally bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade; I think we've been through that haven't we?

*Q: We may have talked about that when we were talking about the Balkan War.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Tom, why don't we take sort of an overall look? How at that time did you or your cohorts in the State Department view China as a power itself and then we'll talk about the Taiwan business. Did we see this as a potential dangerous giant that might be expanding its borders or how did we view it?*

PICKERING: I don't think we viewed China particularly as in an expansionist mode; we took it as a large and serious country growing in strength, certainly building it's own economy, opening up its economy in terms of working toward a market economy as opposed to continuing to operate totally within tight Communist strictures. We saw it potentially as an economic rival and certainly as a major power in the Pacific and through some of its activities as a very significant country with world potential. It was in that sense a great deal of what I would call in the best sense of the word respect for where China was and what it's position was and where it might go. Without predicting that it would be an antagonistic military rival, we saw that it was trying to grow in all areas, trying to reform its military, strengthen it. It had achieved a nuclear capability many years before; It had achieved a rocket capability and a space capability, which was growing. It had a relationship with us that obviously was heavily oriented toward building its own science and technology base and looking to find ways to acquire new technology wherever it could. Those were all features of the China landscape.



*Q: Were we concerned with China as an economic rival that they were basically out to steal our technology or not?*

PICKERING: There was no question at all. The Chinese were engaged in a very dedicated, assiduous hunt to find technology wherever they could and however they could acquire it. They attempted to do so because they saw technology as a key to their own future. Our lead in technology made them look at us as a country, which they could use to develop their own capacities. They had developed some technologies of their own, they had a lot of very capable people, but I also think that they looked at the countries that were more advanced in technological development to show them the direction and the way and perhaps also as a source of that kind of information for them. They had few limits on what they would do to acquire technology beg, borrow or steal I suppose is the unvarnished description.

*Q: In a way, you'd been ambassador to Russia, what about now you are sitting in well a different seat but what about the China-Russia equation?*

PICKERING: Well, I think that the notion then that there was going to be some rapid rapprochement between China and Russia and that China and Russia and maybe India would somehow become a counter balance was, I thought, a little bit far-fetched. The Russian one time foreign minister, later prime minister and former head of their foreign intelligence service, used to make speeches about the need for a multi-polar world in which he obviously postulated that the U.S. somehow would be hedged in, constrained by a Russian-China-India consortium. It was something he was striving for, but it didn't really seem in our view something realizable. Of course, over the years beginning with Henry Kissinger in the Nixon opening with China, a large measure of that was obviously based on Chinese concern about the Russians, about significant dust-ups on their border, about significant differences about who was the leading Communist state in those days and a certain amount of that held on. At the same time, the Russians were selling advanced military equipment to China. I suspect they were limiting the level of technology, but nevertheless China relied heavily on Russia for advanced aircraft among other things- military aircraft. So there was kind of a mixed message there. But at the rock bottom you saw Russia with ten million people east of Lake Baikal with hundreds of millions of Chinese right across the border and with all those resources in Russia. And you just kind of wondered what both the Russians and the Chinese thought about that situation and why there wasn't more pressure on that border. Both sides had exercised serious restraint in maintaining some balance out there. The truth was that in winter with the border rivers frozen there would be nothing to block large numbers of Chinese walking over into Russia except the use of perhaps weapons of mass destruction if the march of people were very large.

*Q: Could you talk to the Chinese through their embassy or people who came from the government?*

PICKERING: Yes I did and I was particularly fortunate that they had a Chinese ambassador during the first portion of my service who was Li Dao Yu. He had been my colleague in New York at the UN and we had worked particularly closely on some issues. So we both knew each other, we had a congenial relationship; we had a very cooperative relationship on some difficult problems in New York. I found him a good interlocutor and he would come to see me often. His

successor in New York Li Zhao Xing then came here; he later went on to become foreign minister but I had known the second Li as well; we got to know him fairly well, we did a lot of work together. He would frequently come in and have some serious complaint that he would convey often on the basis of written papers that he would read. Then after that was over, he would set that paper down and aside and we would get down to whatever business we had to do together.

*Q: Were the Chinese...did they look at the press or the media and take umbrage or was this something that was almost pro forma to complain about or what?*

PICKERING: No, I don't think it was pro forma. I don't think they came gratuitously to complain, but they were concerned about things particularly -- Taiwan was a sensitive area. Things that they thought in their view tilted away from both the one-China policy that the U.S. was pursuing and the various communiqués. They would certainly call to our attention. They wouldn't miss an opportunity to do that.

*Q: You could probably recite the China communiqué by heart?*

PICKERING: Well, after a while we got to know them fairly well. But I think that they felt that it was important to them both within their system and important in laying down markers for us, that they complained about these issues at as a high a level as they could get and put those markers down. If we had any sense that they were concerned that we not stray from the standard they thought ought to be applied. That was in part defensive as well as it was in part offensive -- to keep us on the ranch so to speak on these issues.

*Q: Were there debates within the Clinton administration about how to square this circle that's been there for a long time and that is you had a really democratic Taiwan and you had a one-party Mainland China? We say there is one-China but obviously it's not; how did we feel about that?*

PICKERING: We accepted that there was a one-China but we accepted that it was not yet complete and that Taiwan was not an area we thought we could support being absorbed into China by use of force; so we supported a negotiating proposition. At various times, China and Taiwan had discussions; some of those congealed more than others. By the time I got there, they were pretty frozen and there were very few if any real contacts between the two sides. In the meantime, within Taiwan there was a new party, which later took power, which was very tilted toward Taiwanese independence. The Kuomintang was less tilted toward Taiwanese independence, although they found ways to convey the view that they were not ready to move there immediately they would certainly not want to be seen as being reluctant in promoting a Republic of China vision for the future. The Kuomintang over time became more a party of status quo while the Democratic Party became much more vigorous in its pursuit of independence.

*Q: Were we thinking about a plan B? What happened if you had this new party that would declare independence?*

PICKERING: Oh yes, and we made it very clear to them both publicly and privately that that was a no-no, that they shouldn't go there. The people on the mainland appreciated that and it was something they encouraged us to do. At the same time, we didn't want to interfere any more dramatically in the domestic governance of Taiwan than we already were. Taiwan had elections and Democratic Party got elected; since that time the party has run its course and now lost again to the Kuomintang.

*Q: You were giving me the verbiage of yes there is one-China but it will work its way out and all this which is probably the best way we can do it but in your heart of hearts did you think there was going to be any solution?*

PICKERING: Well, we all thought that over time something would evolve, we didn't have a game plan; I don't know that the Chinese had a game plan. The Chinese at one point, of course, got more vigorous in the use of force as they saw Taiwan moving more vigorously in the direction of independence. There are always those kinds of relationships between the factors as they were seen on the scene and as they developed on the scene. My own view was that in the long term, Beijing was in its own way particularly in the economic area moving closer to Taiwan's form of economic organization. I didn't see that making any long term difference unless and until the political differences could be addressed and resolved. I always thought the mainland would have to find a way to square the circle, if you like, of the differences between its political system and its economic system. In the long run, some of the critical decisions that have to be made in a more open economy are not made very wisely by a narrowly appointed, self-perpetuating leadership. They tend to misjudge where things are because they fall out of touch with popular needs and the flow of popular thinking on these issues. But that was highly theoretical and it was very long term.

*Q: From what I gather from the papers today China has almost devolved into a certain amount of warlordism as far as party cadre running things in different provinces and all.*

PICKERING: I wouldn't say that -that China is not subject to central direction. I think that things were emerging in China that gave more devolved power to the provinces and below. There were communal and village elections for a time. I suspect under a one candidate or two party candidate within the party system, but those were happening. But I think they moved very slowly and they were not, you know, one could see a kind of new evolutionary wave of the future. They were slow and evolutionary so China was taking its time. China was very much struck by what had happened in Russia. They saw the Russian economy and the Russian political system was chaotic and out of control and kind of sliding into a morass of uncertainty and almost un-governability. That was exaggerated, although there were times in Russia when you could see evidence of that kind of thing happening. As a result, there was a hare and tortoise race between the two as to who would get their economy right and who would get their governance arrangements right. To some extent, of course, the Russians managed to move both of those in a more open direction for a while; there was no Communist Party of significance left in Russia, there are Communist Party members of a certain age, but the Party itself has lost its vitality. On the other hand, you've got a group of people who are ex-Communists running a State Party which looks very much like Latin American statist operation; an official party. In China, you have the Communist Party, which occupies much of the same role. Russia has elections although

because of the monopoly on state power in the State Party, it is difficult to see that those elections will turn to someone outside the State Party very soon. In China that seems almost impossible or unlikely under current circumstances. One can imagine it maybe in the future, but those are the differences. In Taiwan, of course we've seen in recent elections the parties shifted from the Democratic Party back to the Kuomintang.

*Q: Did we feel that as a force Communism is no longer even a factor by this time?*

PICKERING: It's hard to see it as a factor in economic organization; it was possible to see it as a factor in government ideals and slogans and things. But to have, in fact, a much more open market organization, meant that the government role in the economy then became limited to things like making critical strategic choices, pursuing development plans but leaving large sectors of the economic activity and economic operations open to private and semi-privatized organizations.

*Q: Was there concern I've heard people talk about this today. We are going through and economic slump is probably...*

PICKERING: Yeah, we'll be lucky if it is only a slump.

*Q: It's more than that but pointing out that the Chinese are going to be suffering from this because people won't be buying as much of their stuff. For the Chinese there is always the Nationalist button to push as we were talking about when the Belgrade embassy was hit. You can get really mobs in the streets; this xenophobia is very deep rooted in China. Was there concern that this was something that could spring up at any time or maybe over minor incidents?*

PICKERING: I think there was concern and indeed there was some shock at the degree of reaction over the Belgrade bombing. There is always the sense that there are suspicions that this is created by government agitation as much as it is by popular demand. We saw a confluence and there was clear evidence that the government was facilitating such demos at the time of the Belgrade bombing not blocking them. How much of the recruiting and how much of the actual involvement was government stimulated I don't know, it's hard to know this.

I have checked and we have not really covered the Belgrade Embassy bombing except for a brief note or two. The major item was the conversations in Beijing about the mistake we made in finding a target in Belgrade when we needed one and the reaction of the Foreign Ministry both official and unofficial. Officially they did not budge an inch -- we were not telling them the truth. Unofficially, they published a summary of my talking points, almost exactly right, in the official news agency the day I delivered them. They wanted to put the issue behind us. The interesting thing is we have not evolved yet a set of arrangements for dealing with any such problems as they may come up in the future.

*Q: But it does seem to be a nerve that can be set off.*

PICKERING: I think it is safe to say that the Chinese have a very strong sense of nationalism, a very strong sense of their importance. Traditionally, the culture has been very strongly oriented

that way, they've seen themselves as the Middle Kingdom of the world, so they do look upon themselves as a very old, very advanced, very prestigious, and very civilized group of people.

*Q: How did you deal, you as under secretary deal with the representation of Taiwan? Was there anyway you could deal with them?*

PICKERING: No, I didn't have any direct relationships with them. There were representatives here in town, I'm trying to think whether I may have either gone to social events there I don't think there was any...

*Q: In Rosslyn or wherever?*

PICKERING: No they had an office, they had a very nice mansion, Tregaron up in northwest. But I can't remember whether that was while I was under secretary or what. But we never made it a thing we would do in public. I think I did some things when I was with Boeing afterward, but I didn't see them, they didn't call on me.

*Q: How did you feel lines of communication were with Taiwan? Obviously it's an important factor in our relations.*

PICKERING: We had an American Institute in Taiwan which operated in a de facto way. It was not considered an embassy but it performed a lot of the same functions. We had reporting from them, we had information on their contacts; I knew the man who was in charge of it. The staff left the Foreign Service in order to do this job and came back afterward so that it was a kind of pro forma arrangement to make sure that they were as unofficial as we could make them.

*Q: Had we developed a strong cadre of China hands by the time you were there?*

PICKERING: We had and we are continuing to train people in Chinese and in Chinese history and politics and so forth. There were a number of younger officers, some of whom I got to know, and some who came to work for me with Chinese language who I thought knew and understood the country well. The language school was in Kaohsiung in Taiwan; they had also served in Taiwan.

*Q: What about the problem of human rights while you were doing this?*

PICKERING: That was always a problem and always a persistent one. We had Falun Gong problems, protests and things of that sort.

*Q: The Falun Gong is a...*

PICKERING: A religious sect or a semi-religious sect inside China that the Chinese government doesn't find very compatible with their own approaches to life. In any event, we talked to the Chinese about it and made demarches about it; we attempted to try to deal with the Chinese relationship as a whole rather than to subdivide it into pieces in which we decided which ones we would use to put on pressure. The Chinese knew that, in fact, to some extent as we pushed them

on human rights if they were not responsive other more favorable to them pieces might go out the window, but we didn't spend a whole lot of time trying to limit the relationship just to human rights and then just beat them up on human rights because there were mutual interests that we had with China that we wanted to promote as well. My sense is the better the relationship the more progress you could make on the hard issues like human rights.

In some ways much of the tension between the non-governmental organizational community and the State Department comes from this issue. The non-governmental organization community is by nature special interest and single interest oriented. The State Department, particularly in a relationship as large as China has to look across the whole breath of relations. So while the single issue orientation of some of these groups, whether it's non-proliferation or human rights, means that their interest is to reduce all of our relationships with China to that one issue and then use pressure if the Chinese are not responsive to the ideas that they have in order to try to get the Chinese to move. That can take many forms. Sanctions or denial of trade is one such method. They rarely advocate going if ever use of force, because they know that it's beyond the pale without some real serious justification. Those always produced tensions in the relationships and as I said the NGO community is enormously viable, but it happens very often to be dedicated to a single interest purpose and that has to be kept in balance if we are going to pursue a relationship.

My own limited experience with China was that if we had a broad relationship with many positive facets in it and could make progress on the positive side of the agenda, we were more strongly placed to work with the Chinese on the negatives. That was because they had a common interest with us in moving ahead on the positive side As a result, they had a common interest with us in not having the negative issues become the sole determinant of our future relationship or become points of special aggravation.

*Q: Did you find anyone dealing with America knows that the State Department's an important factor if you are a foreign government but it's not the only one? China, being a one-party system and all, did you find that there were other areas sort of economic ways that you could talk to sort of economic people and say, "You know, this human rights case is sort of screwing up something?" In other words, were there other approaches to China?*

PICKERING: I didn't really get involved in that level of detail. So I assume there were and I think the ambassador and the embassy staff worked it that way, but that was not something that I was involved in, that kind of tactical articulation in those relations.

*Q: I was wondering if you would comment...you've already commented on to some extent but something that you and I came in when NGOs were a minor organization. I dealt with them early on because I was in the Refugee Relief Program and we were working with the Tolstoy Foundation and resettled refugees; that was about it. But today and I guess from maybe the '80s or so and NGOs are really an important arrow in our foreign relations quiver.*

PICKERING: As I said I thought that they were very helpful in some areas but often they had a lot of serious differences with the US government. We had serious differences when I worked with them in Central America, but they helped in many ways by keeping the pressure on, to keep

a focus on the subjects they were interested in. They often helped the government figure out where it wanted to go on the basis of their articulation of a moral imperative; about how to move the process ahead. I think we got into the 'single issue' problem with them all the time.

*Q: It's difficult I suppose to talk to a non-governmental organization, which has one issue and say well you are just one issue and we have other ones. I mean this is not a very good argument.*

PICKERING: No, we could say that we thought we over time got further by having a broad relationship with China including in some cooperative areas than we did by reducing everything to a huge dispute over issue X.

*Q: Oh no, I completely agree. How about India-China? Let's talk about Tibet. Tibet was not really a part of our issue any more?*

PICKERING: Yes it was and it continued to play a role and the Dalai Lama was a very popular figure. He came to see people here and there was a lot of interest in Tibet and there were a lot of organizations interested in it. The Chinese were not particularly receptive to discussions on this subject. They have since opened up the ability to have conversations with the Tibetans, but they have drawn the line pretty hard on that issue. I think we were careful not to espouse Tibetan independence in order to provide the Chinese with the clear view that we continue to see one-China apply there. But we did talk to them about our concern -- there was a negation of rights for Tibetans and oppression and similar difficulties. Of course, the Tibetans had been in revolt for some time and the Chinese had known that we had clandestinely supported that revolt in the '60s. Part of the Chinese reaction to India in '62, I think, came out of support for Tibetans coming from south of the border.

*Q: A little border war they had there. Did we see any problems with or developments with Hong Kong? Were we watching that particularly?*

PICKERING: Yes we watched it closely from the colony itself as it transferred to China. We watched obviously as the special zone became significant for China, but also continued to have its own special status. We stayed in touch with the leadership in Hong Kong on both sides of the equation. Those that were very favorable to very close relationships with Beijing and those were very favorable to preserving the rights that had been developed there under the British and that were preserved in the reunification arrangement.

*Q: Well then moving on, Korea. Let's do South Korea first now. How stood things with South Korea at that time?*

PICKERING: Well in '98 and '97 you had the huge Asian financial collapse and Korea was among the tigers, but clearly heavily influenced by what was going on in the rest of the region. We were very concerned. We tried to assist them in dealing with their problems as we did some of the other tigers, but it set them back a long way and it took them a long time to come back. We were always concerned that the peninsula itself had a potential for resurgence of conflict, which we didn't want to see. A great deal of stability had been achieved in the peninsula over that period of time. There were desultory talks on going with the North, but earlier, several years

earlier, Bob Gallucci and other U.S. diplomats had worked out an agreement for the dismantling of Yongbyon, the reactor producing plutonium in North Korea -- as a result of our deep concerns about non-proliferation.

*Q: Who was fulfilling the agreement because there's always been this dispute?*

PICKERING: Well we had continuing problems. Part of it was that we had real struggle getting Congress to appropriate enough money to provide the heavy fuel oil which was supposed to be provided to North Korea until a new power reactor was built, principally funded by South Korea and the Japanese. We were doing it through the KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization), the organization we had set up for that purpose. The North Koreans constantly complained about the late deliveries and as a result often took that as a signal on their side that they should try to undo their compliance with some portion of the agreement. The agreement was pretty fragile and in some cases it was fraying. We had go back up to the Congress and argue that they should provide the funding for this heavy fuel oil so we didn't fall off too far behind in our deliveries to the North.

*Q: What was the problem with Congress?*

PICKERING: There were a number of members of the House in particular who didn't like the agreement and thought that it wasn't going to be very solid and that having to deliver this fuel oil was, from their perspective, expensive and not very effective.

*Q: What was your feeling about this?*

PICKERING: I thought that the agreement was a reasonable one, that we ought to carry out our side of the bargain and we ought to continue to use that to put pressure on North Korea to stay committed. Of course, the more that we were undermining our side of the bargain the less we could put pressure on to get the North Koreans to get them to come along.

*Q: Were we concerned at that time about the so-called hard landing soft landing of if North Korea would implode? Or was that not particularly on our concern?*

PICKERING: We were deeply concerned by evidence during some of the time I was under secretary with evidence of mass starvation, the need for very significant amounts of outside assistance to keep North Korea afloat, to provide them food aid. There were very frequent stories coming out about that and large numbers of North Koreans crossing the border into China.

*Q: Did we sit around? I mean were we trying to figure out what to do if all of a sudden the whole thing collapsed or did we feel this was in the cards?*

PICKERING: We didn't have a lot of what I would call preplanning for collapse of North Korea and what happens if it falls like a ripe plum into somebody's arms. We were very conscience that the Chinese had serious interest and would be allergic to the notion that there would be any kind of change in the military balance in the area. Also, the Chinese had a common border and saw North Korea as a buffer for them and therefore were more likely than we were to feel the effects



of any implosion and to be required to protect themselves against those effects by intervening. The Chinese had no interest in seeing the United States once again on that border, nor were they enchanted with the prospect of the South Korean military ending up there. I had an expectation that over time we should talk to China about this question, quietly and without publicity

*Q: With the military balance what were they talking about?*

PICKERING: The Chinese much as they were in the '50s with the Korean War were very concerned that there not be large American forces at or near their border. I don't know how they would feel about South Korean forces, maybe less concerned that if there were reunification and the South Koreans' moved some forces into their region, but I'm not sure because we never had discussed that with them.

*Q: By this time were we concerned that Kim Il-Song might in an irrational matter start an attack on the South or was this pretty much off?*

PICKERING: I think we thought he'd gone through that before and got very badly hit His father Kim Il-Song, Kim Il-Song I think was still alive and he didn't seem to want to repeat that.

*Q: No, having lived for three years on that border we were concerned. Well then moving over to well before we hit Japan, we can do Japan another time.*

PICKERING: Yeah, I'm going to have to pull out in about five minutes for an appointment.

*Q: OK, well maybe we will stop here.*

PICKERING: OK.

*Q: Then I will put at the end here I'd like to pick it up...*

PICKERING: With Japan.

*Q: We will talk about Japan and we'll talk about really Thailand and Malaysia.*

PICKERING: Southeast Asia.

*Q: Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand.*

PICKERING: Sure, OK.

*Q: And the island problems and all that. Then we really haven't gone, I'll check but I think we really haven't done Africa or...*

PICKERING: Latin America.

*Q: Latin America.*

PICKERING: OK.

*Q: Great.*

*Q: Okay, today is the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2009. This is an interview with Tom Pickering. Tom, we had been doing a tour of the horizon as we say in our trade and we are now to Japan. You were the undersecretary from when to when?*

PICKERING: From April '97 to the end of December 2000.

*Q: How stood things with Japan at that time.*

PICKERING: Well interestingly enough there was a kind of combination view; it's easier to see in retrospect. I was not deeply involved in our relations with Japan; they were being well handled by the bureau. Indeed the fact that the bureau was pretty much in charge of the Japanese relationship indicated few crises. I suppose that in the main economic problems were bad in Japan and Japan was in a hole that it had been in for four or five years before that and continued on in terms of its ability to move into an area of growth again. This did not necessarily disturb the United States because in the '90s we had been through this period of Japan becoming the world's major economic power.

*Q: And we should copy what they are doing.*

PICKERING: Copy what they were doing and also to be deeply concerned about the competitive nature of the Japanese. There was no question at all that the administration tended to look at China in the Asian picture as both the pre-eminent power and problem. The Japanese didn't like the power part. The Japanese had been used to being treated equally with the Chinese at least in terms of protocol. So people in the Democratic administration had begun to make trips to China without stopping off in Japan either before or after to give the Japanese a sense of what was going on with us and China. The Japanese took a certain amount of umbrage at those kinds of things. Over a period of time it began to look like to the Japanese that the Republicans were their closest friends and those that looked out for them the most, while the Democrats tended to take them for granted and assumed they would always be there for us.

*Q: At one time the Democrats seemed to prefer India to Pakistan and the Republicans would see to Pakistan? Sometimes you would get these party things but how about this Japanese-Chinese thing? Did you see any reason for this?*

PICKERING: No, I think it was more by happenstance than direction. It tended more to reflect personal preferences than party preferences. It tended more to reflect evaluations of the situation than it was necessarily a kind of studied policy choice. China was higher maintenance. China required more effort. China produced more controversy and as well more opportunities. China was new while Japan had been on for years. There was also a tendency to consider in the alliance that the Japanese were always the junior partners; we had the nuclear part of the equation and we were defending them so they didn't have to go in that direction. There was also the hangover

from the war and the Japanese constitution that the Japanese armed forces would be strictly limited to self-defense. We were international power projectors; it wasn't possible to think that the Japanese would necessarily come to our aid all around the world in the same sense that we would help them. This was true despite the fact that they were still considered one of the major economies of the world and a country that had some innate, very significant strengths. These different perspectives were kind of interesting. As you reflect on them you can understand and see why people were drawn into different patterns of behavior and varying attitudes toward China and Japan.

The contrast between Clinton and Bush II was quite strong and in large measure a good bit of this was because Rich Armitage had spent a great deal of his career and time both in the military and beyond and his consulting life in dealing with Japan; he was well thought of in Japan. Rich's role as deputy secretary and looking after the Japan brief and personalizing it in part helped to provide a different perspective. It was that change which some would say was personal that tended to emphasize the contrast.

*Q: Well these personal things do play a role.*

PICKERING: Oh yes.

*Q: How did you find the Japanese embassy as an instrument of Japan?*

PICKERING: Well I'm trying to think who was here as the Japanese ambassador at the time. I didn't have a lot to do with the Japanese ambassador; they tended in the main to deal with the bureau. Sometimes when they had high-level visitors they dealt up above me so that that wasn't the kind of area where I had a special brief or where the Japanese considered that they had a special willing ear. If I had any area in which I had a serious weakness in terms of having had association with the region, it was the EAP a bureau in which I had never really served or in their area, I went to Japan in part at their request on my way to India to talk to some close Japanese friends, senior Japanese foreign ministry officials about India. Later on in Russia, in particular, we had close contacts and I spoke to the Japanese often and had a close contact with the Japanese ambassador in Russia; but this was focused on a particular situation -- their relations with Russia over the Kuriles.

Strobe had dealt with the Japanese in Washington on Russia and as I remember continued to keep that particular part of his brief open; this was particularly on the Northern Territories issues. So he dealt with that, there was no reason for the two of us to hop on the same bus.

*Q: Was anybody in the Department what amounts to a straight line projection looking at the demographics of Japan which seemed as we are speaking today still they don't welcome immigrants kindly and they're population rate is going down.*

PICKERING: Their population is aging.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: And their birth rate is declining and population growth is receding. I don't know that anybody was reviewing this, but if it was being done it would have been done in INR at the level of the intelligence community. I read lots and lots of reports, none stuck out on this and Russia was going through a similar decline. Western Europe was too and so there may have been some of these demographic reports that looked ahead that they incorporated it all.

*Q: You weren't calling up saying do something about this.*

PICKERING: So it could well have taken place, it's long enough ago that I can use faulty memory or inability to recall. Dealing with demographic problems means that generally you dealt with the impact and results, rather than as an outsider, think about trying to change growth rates for example.

*Q: I mentioned at the end that we want to talk more about the Asia-Pacific area. Let's talk about the islands. Did the islands; EAP stands for East Asia Pacific Islands isn't it?*

PICKERING: No, it just blended the two geographies. Was Japan East Asia or Pacific? I think that basically we may have had off and on a few small thing with the islands. There was competition between Taiwan and Beijing over which particular small island country would accept China or Taiwan. It was often determined by the level of aid being offered. We had a great deal more to do with Australia; Timor was a particular issue.

*Q: Okay, let's go over to that Australia-Timor business while you were there.*

PICKERING: Well Timor was going on while I was there. Again the bureau did an extremely affective job in dealing with it; occasionally it rose up to a point where it was useful for me to weigh in. Occasionally, I had contacts over this period, I can't remember the exact dates, as things went to pieces and then we got heavily dependent on the Australians to help pick them up. Of course with the UN involvement, I dealt from time to time with the Australian Ambassador, Andrew Peacock. Andrew had a direct line to Prime Minister Howard so he was able to both relay back Australian thinking from the top but also to get messages across. We were able to put to perhaps to rest some misimpressions about where both of us were heading from time to time. I think that helped and the Australians, as you know, later picked up a good piece of the peace-keeping and undertook to in effect be the security stabilizer under the UN mandate in East Timor with others present, but not in large numbers.

*Q: They were there.*

PICKERING: Well it was in their neighborhood. On the other hand they didn't have a large military force and I would suspect that they devoted a considerable share of what was then their available power on the ground immediately to Timor. For some time before that they had played a significant role in Cambodia peacekeeping.

*Q: You saw Australian as being a very solid ally; we were all working...*

PICKERING: I suppose over the history of time, even to some extent including the Brits, our relationships with Australia were and have been as close and as understanding as any that I've ever seen. The Australians thought because they had developed after the Second World War special expertise in their near abroad region which they were concerned about; Indonesia in particular brought some particular expertise, they could be helpful and we agreed. John McCarthy who was Australian ambassador for quite some time in Indonesia was somebody we all listened to and recognized as having brought special analytical understanding in that area. The Australians in a military sense attempted to develop what they thought was necessary to play in their own region, but were also heavily dependent on us. Of course, then we had the attendant problem of New Zealand which had become in those days been very much dominated by the view that they didn't want any association with anything nuclear. They didn't facilitate port visits of U.S. vessels by seeking to get us to declare as to whether the vessels carried nuclear weapons, something we were not prepared to do. That immediately put up serious restraints and the ANZUS relationship went downhill in the sense that the New Zealand piece of it became moribund and stagnant. The treaty itself in effect became a bilateral alliance between the United States and Australia. The Australians worked hard over a period of time quietly to see whether they could find ways to patch things up, but the New Zealand domestic political situation and the popularity of the anti-nuclear views never during that particular period of time and I think since then put New Zealand in a position to be able to shift that policy, even if they had wanted to.

*Q: Given that would you say for a period, not just your time but other times, would you call the relations strained or distant with New Zealand?*

PICKERING: Yes, I think they were strained. I don't think anybody tried to create extensive distance; on the other hand there was a falling away in the feeling of an alliance and relations were in every sense correct, but less close. We were able to do business with them in other areas that was certainly my impression. Again, I didn't spend a lot of my time dealing with occasionally we all took a look to see whether there was a break through possible there to get back into a relationship. A look at whether some form of agreement or words or general approach could patch up the situation. Of course, the subject of the difference was so stark it was very difficult to paper it over with a diplomatic compromise that would have allowed us, both sides, to say this was a difficult period but we are now over it and we are now going to put it behind us. We had to get ship visits back and they were not in a position to give up their nuclear inquiries in connection with ship visits. I tried for a time with the New Zealand perm rep in New York when I was there to see if there was an available formula, but that did not prosper. (2015 Things have come around a bit since we no longer have nuclear weapons on naval ships.)

*Q: Was there ever a tie in between nuclear weapons and lamb?*

PICKERING: No, occasionally people thought about the question, but we had a hesitation to tie stuff to trade deals even if we could have. I don't know where we were in the WTO, but certainly in the WTO that kind of retaliation is not allowed and it would have put us in a very difficult position. I can't remember the timing and whatever legal process that could have gone through to test that.

*Q: Well in Australia did some of those not just listening but sort of sonar posts or something we had stuck in the middle of Australia, I mean there were bases that seemed to cause political controversy I mean joint bases.*

PICKERING: These seemed to for a while. I don't think they do any longer, but we had listening posts and things that could monitor space activities and things that were taking place at a great distance. So I don't believe in fact that while they tended to allow or provoke occasionally the Australian left to provide problems -- in the context of the Cold War were seen as making Australia an unnecessary target for Soviet retaliation -- something that looked pretty farfetched to us. That played a minor role, to me that seems mainly to have disappeared.

*Q: I just haven't seen any evidence of it arising.*

PICKERING: Yes, they involved everything from being able to monitor communications and signals activities all around the world to providing the U.S. Navy with a very low frequency transmitter for submarine patrols and a whole bunch of other things. The Australian geography and indeed the Australian willingness to cooperate with us they were pretty much meant that we had some unique capacities there that were very valuable to us.

*Q: Did Thailand play much of a role?*

PICKERING: Not really. I'm trying to think if there was anything. Thailand again just to go back Stanley Roth as assistant secretary ran a good bureau; he was certainly hardworking and stayed on top of all of these subjects. As I remember in those days South East Asia had kind of disappeared from the front burner. We were building back relationships with Vietnam. Pete Peterson a former U.S. Air Force POW had gone out as ambassador and done quite a remarkable job and had helped to begin to take the Vietnam relationship from one of just renewed relations under very severe strain into a position where the Vietnamese began to look for opportunities to work with us or to develop relations with us. Occasionally, I would see the Vietnamese ambassador here in town socially and otherwise and encourage them to understand that we were off on a new relationship and we could do things together. It was very early days and there was not much trade, there was some presence and we were working to try and resolve lots of the MIA/POW issues. They were, in general, cooperative; it was a remarkable turnaround in many ways from the very bitter period of war.

*Q: Were we looking at Vietnam and the people you were talking to and dealing with as going through this business of being technically a Marxist state when actually this was a bunch of old guys controlling the elements of power?*

PICKERING: Yes, I think we had the last of that. We had been through enough of that. I mean there were perhaps things on the statue books one way or another that we could find ways to move around. We saw after the Chinese incursion into Vietnam following the war in the '70s and Vietnam's own interest as ruthless as it was in reuniting the country and then coming into the international community as a kind of opportunity. The lights went on that Vietnam is not a kind of cemented in concrete into heart of a Sino-Soviet bloc which never really existed. There was increasing evidence of Vietnamese nationalism being a primary and motivating factor in their

own decisions about themselves and where they should go. There were, of course, during this period and before tensions over Cambodia, There is no question that the Vietnamese were still looking at Cambodia and Laos to some extent as their frontier and they wanted to be careful not to have things happen there that would be difficult for them. There was no love for Pol Pot, of course, that had just about disappeared by that time. But there was no question at all that Hung Sen in Cambodia had close relationships with the Vietnamese while he was not a Vietnamese creature; he was careful not to forget what I would call Vietnamese interests across the border. Laos had kind of drifted back into almost semi-somnolence in some ways and was not a heady or difficult problem.

Myanmar was certainly an issue with Aung San Suu Kyi and become, particularly for Secretary Albright, someone who she felt was important to support not just on the basis of democracy and human rights, although that was a primary motivating factor. But Madeleine, as a woman, had a serious interest in other women political leaders and felt for a long time that Aung San Suu Kyi had been particularly badly treated by the military leadership and from time to time looked for opportunities to see whether we could bring pressure for change in her house arrest. This was of special interest to her. I can't tell you that it ever, I think, moved the ball forward. The military have continued to be notably adamant on these things, but that was something at least as we watched the region that was clearly her special interest.

*Q: How did we use Singapore? Lee Kwan Yew was he sort of considered a great person to consult with or not?*

PICKERING: Yeah, I think he over the years continues to do so. In those days it was, I think, less his retired status as the Singaporeans call him -- minister mentor role both in his internal role in Singapore, which remains obviously very salient. But I think people recognized that he had wide contacts and deep skills in understanding what was happening in the region and beyond and was someone as a result worth consulting with. I don't think that anybody necessarily felt that his advice was either infallible or an absolute requirement to follow, but on the other hand he is and has been a remarkable individual in terms of understanding what goes on, especially in Asia has. I think the United States always considered him somebody very valuable to touch base with and worth listening to and certainly worth understanding and appreciating. Singapore continued to develop in its own way and I think that the United States could count on Singapore in the main to have similar views and we exchanged views frequently and we saw their leadership in the region as valuable. They were extremely careful, as they had always been cautious, not to try and become a city state elephant inside of ASEAN; they understood. Of course, they over a period of time both tensions in the past with Indonesia and with Malaysia and they were careful not to try to rekindle these. I think they followed careful policies; they had tremendous economic interests and built themselves up as an economic trading and financial power in the region things that naturally gravitated to them. They had some burdens in the region because of their large percentage of Chinese population, but they didn't flaunt this, they didn't try to push it in anybody else's face.

*Q: Did the Chinese pretty well keep their hands off as far as trying to push the ethnic button or something like that?*

PICKERING: Oh I think over the years they had. Of course, you know that at the time of the rise of Suharto there was, in effect, a tremendous effort on the part of the Indonesians to go after both the Communists and the Chinese that tended to be somewhat coterminous in their views and it was a very nasty kind of...

*Q: '63 or '64.*

PICKERING: I think the record of that led the Chinese to believe that they should be cautious about trying to play the ethnic card. Most of the overseas Chinese in those places recognized that there was a growing pre-eminence of Beijing which they had to respect and deal with and were careful with it. But they did not become puppets of Beijing; all the tensions that existed between Taiwan and Beijing played out in those various communities, some of it not very nicely, but it was there. It tended in some ways to make sure that each of them understood that they were working in a separate country where they had to be also seen by the local population, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, as not being the agents of outside foreign influence.

*Q: I take it that we were seeing the Chinese, Mainland Chinese, diplomatic corps and their foreign policy as being pretty damn sophisticated. In other words the ideology or ethnic forces weren't running the show?*

PICKERING: Less so, of course, with the disappearance of Mao and the end of the Cultural Revolution which had some impact overseas. It was much more influential in China. The Chinese became with the opening to the U.S. more willing to take the view that their revolution had now tempered its extremism. It was coming into a situation where China was going from being the world's largest undeveloped country to becoming a new significant power particularly on the international economic scene. China was looking in those early days for the beginnings of its place in the world. It was interesting to see this progression; it was almost a period of textbook post-revolutionary behavior of a developing economy all at the same time. Economic issues became less Marxist-driven and more market-related. All of those changes began to determine how China would proceed. We see the flowering of this today in many ways in which China has been able to achieve what it wanted -- to be seen as good neighbors, as in the vanguard of the growing group of developing countries, but also with a serious vocation among the large and very significant powers of the world. The two could be harmonized, but not necessarily made congruent as they went ahead. To me this has been fascinating to watch and you know I'm a not China watcher in any sense of the word. I don't have special training or background. I am acutely conscious of the fact the specialists may have arguments with my conclusions. But over the years as an American diplomat around the world you cannot help but have watched with some admiration and understanding of how the Chinese were very careful in managing these relationships. It wasn't that they didn't make mistakes, but it was true that when they made mistakes, they worked very hard to learn how to avoid continuing them. The agility of Chinese policy in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a remarkable testimony to the fact that they have been serious about understanding the world, careful in defining their own place in it, conscious of where they wanted to go and with few exceptions very wise. They had come from being an ideological country to becoming a much more practical country; so you see all this transformation. What also struck me was that they used in the early days a combination of punishment, confession of error and correction as a control device for elements of their



population. While that was not directly applied to foreign policy, they seem to have had the capacity to recognize mistakes and move quite rapidly to correct them. Something on our side which we do not find easy to do.

*Q: One of the things that does disturb me is from time to time when there is an incident like collision of American and Chinese plane over the China Sea and all. All of a sudden you have mobs...I mean, you can push that anti-foreign button in China far too easily. I find it somewhat disturbing.*

PICKERING: I think so. There is no question at all that. I think my impression is, particularly after the Belgrade bombing incident, that there are many young Chinese who are willing with government leadership to play the nationalist card and to be nationalist. The history of China is one that there has been both internal divisions, 'warlordism' and serious embarrassment in its inability as one of the world's great cultures to fend off what were basically 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century foreign incursions into China.- the creation of foreign imperial footprints. The Communist-led revolution made a major shift and the central feature of that in my view was less Karl Marx than it was Chinese history.

*Q: Sure, expel the foreign devils.*

PICKERING: Sure.

*Q: The Boxer Rebellion.*

PICKERING: Those were extreme versions, but underneath the Chinese felt 'dissed' by the international community and as a result felt that they had to swim hard in the swift current running against them to reestablish their position. While there were Chinese nationalistic extremists, there were also people who felt that it was time for China to demonstrate its strength so that it would regain and retain a position of international respect. This fit with traditional Chinese views, 'middle kingdom', center of the world, great culture. They had an historical imperative in their view to become a leading part of the international community. But this had been carefully tempered in some ways. In a quite an unusual way they have not sought in extensive approaches to try to extend Chinese hegemony over neighboring regions. There was certainly the serious touchiness with India and the unhappiness with the Vietnamese as two examples to the contrary. They had the long border conflict with Russia mainly over islands in the Amur River and other things. They have put that away now and worked out their differences and not made that a major feature of Chinese policy. They have become in that sense less Jihadi about it all and one would say more sophisticated and more focused. But they have led the rest of the world by their actions to believe that they do not intend to exert imperial sway, even on the potentially messy problem of the islands in the South China Sea.

*Q: The Spratly Islands and that sort of thing.*

PICKERING: There are also some differences with the Japanese and the Koreans over the more northern of these islands and oil development. They have been working toward agreements in

those areas, not yet final and complete, but not necessarily things that were inevitably going to result in military conflict.

*Q: How about the Philippines? In a way I have the feeling that they've been almost this sort of started during your time and almost a disengagement from the Philippines would you say?*

PICKERING: Well there was that, particularly since we pulled out of Clark Air Force base and Subic Bay naval station. To some extent in the period previously because of the Vietnam war much of our relationship in the Philippines was dominated by military access as well as historic ties. It has now moved around to commercial and trade interests. Historical ties are still there, but have become less significant. There is always a question that when a big colony gets to be independent what role is played by the former imperial power. The issue was heavily conditioned by Japanese occupation and the fact that we fought together and that we had and still continue to have a special relationship. There has been serious concern about what one would call the leadership styles and tendencies in the Philippines, all the way from the very serious concern about Fernando Marcos and eventually our very significant role at the end of his administration to the fact that the successor to Philippine leadership hasn't been all that we would have hoped. We would have liked to have seen them governed in a way that would have matched the most efficient and most dedicated American state government....

*Q: A certain match...*

PICKERING: ...what one would call the run of the mill American states.

*Q: As someone who was born in Chicago I had to be careful about what I say as we are going through the usual Chicago scandal or Illinois scandal.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Tom, were we concerned about guerrilla movements in the Philippines or was this sort of a minor problem?*

PICKERING: No, we were. There was in a Muslim role in the south Mindanao, which continued to bother us. The Libyan connection was a problem that we felt was messy and not easy to deal with. We put some effort into dealing with it, but not nearly what we did after 9/11. Then we had a sense that this was a major arena for the expansion of al Qaida and other radical Islamist fundamentalist influence in the region. It appeared to be limited to Mindanao and the areas south of Mindanao toward Malaysian Borneo. I would say it didn't get a high level of attention, but it got some attention.

*Q: How did we feel about these small military training teams that we have? I finished this book and I can't think of the name right now but by Robert Kaplan. He talks about small, well training teams, Special Forces type people who we have scattered all over the area.*

PICKERING: That was an important part of our effort to try and get the Filipino's in a position where they could deal with these issues on their own. During the time, we had much more

tension and much more difficulty with Indonesia than we did with the Philippines. Indonesia had kind of slid away for a while. But with the disappearance of Suharto from the scene, the new governments coming on and with the oil resources and its large population, it became a point of center focus. I made some trips out and spent some time dealing with the issues and spent a lot of time learning about the issues. It was not necessarily a particularly easy period. We had leaders in Indonesia come to power who were not as strong as they should be or perhaps as focused as we would like to have seen them in bringing Indonesia further along into the 21<sup>st</sup> century -- along a more democratic path.

Nevertheless, both Sukarno's daughter, Megawati, and some of the other leaders of more Islamic tendencies, were trying for change as they saw it. In the very difficult political situation that was in Indonesia, the current leadership, as it comes out of the army, is quite remarkable. It isn't a new kind of new Suharto regime. It's allowing some political light to dawn into the situation. But we were watching it very carefully. We had serious concerns over East Timor regarding military excesses and abuses there. We then cut off military training, military training teams as a way of sending messages to the Army that we didn't approve of or didn't like their behavior in Timor. To some extent that created blow back. We've had a constant battle often championed on different sides by State and Defense in places like Indonesia or Pakistan as to whether we should use the cut-off of military relationships as a pressure point and a way of signaling unhappiness with their behavior and as an influence to get that changed. It has not worked very well, especially in places where we had other salient interests to pursue.

*Q: The other side of it, of course, is you cut this off and you've cut off our reaching the officer corps and training them in what we would consider best practices.*

PICKERING: True, it's a double-edged sword and it's one that over the years we've used in different ways at different times. You are entirely right that the more we remain estranged from the military, the less influence we are able to have with them -- and in some places they play a major role in politics. Some also question whether or not, even if we are not as estranged we have a significant amount of useful influence with or without the military. New countries immediately post-independence have tended to be more influenced by American training. As things went on and as they become more familiar with the United States maybe they became less influenced. A lot of idealism has slid away in this process and maybe in the end it was never really all that idealistically dominated; we just happen to look back historically and think about it that way.

*Q: How did you find ASEAN as an instrument or as an organization?*

PICKERING: ASEAN had its own rules and its own limitations. It was vitally necessary for us to help it prosper and therefore respect them. It did not want to become, and fought very hard to avoid becoming, an instrument of American policy in the region -- another alliance that we could directly or indirectly dominate and devoted to our ends. It was very much focused on its own ends; it was very frustrating that when it took in Myanmar and it was not sufficiently robust or influential to turn Myanmar into the kind of democracy that we hoped for -- that we thought all of the rest of the ASEANs should become. We were frustrated by that. Their view was that this requires long term change. It requires solidarity and strength in the region and these imperatives

are much more important than creating as a standard for ASEAN membership and further cooperation the ideal domestic political situation to which a lot of Americans were attached. So we've always been frustrated in some ways by ASEAN's ability to accept plural semi-democracies without seeking on their own to become our kind of political players. Of course, among the ASEAN states there was a great deal of mutual respect. There was a full respect there for the independence of each state.

*Q: Did we find ourselves trying to make sure that we didn't try to meddle too much in ASEAN or not?*

PICKERING: We were careful to understand that the organization itself had purposes and values, which were important to us and we should be careful not to become, in fact, the *bête noir* of the organization or indeed a cause for its collapse or failure. We also felt that it was important and significant to use quiet diplomacy in continuing to encourage these states to move in directions that we thought were more compatible with our ideas about democracy.

*Q: How did you find Bill Clinton dealing with this whole thing, sort of a Pacific and Asian countries are sort of our Western thrust as opposed to our Atlantic thrust? How is he with you looking at it as a diplomat as an instrument?*

PICKERING: It was interesting. Both as an 'instrumentalizer' of diplomacy and also as a conceptualizer, Clinton despite his English sojourn as a Rhodes Scholar, did not come to the presidency with a sense that we were a Europe first country now and forever. He had a much better sense of balance, he studied it, and he analyzed it. He understood, saw and appreciated the rise of Asia. He did not try to play out a game between Europe and Asia.

*Q: You find this in contrast with some other presidents.*

PICKERING: Other presidents were more European centric, but that was much closer to the Second World War and much closer perhaps to some of the difficulties we faced then and which have shifted around now. I didn't find that true with Nixon and certainly not with Reagan in so far as it was clear that Reagan had thought about a lot of these questions in that same degree of sophisticated detail. Clinton was very much aware of what one would call the need for a sense of balance between Europe and Asia -- that we should not overweight this either way. He clearly was interested in and appreciated China, where it had come from. But he also clearly played a large role and was very interested in Russia which I saw so much more first hand. He had the capacity to play a big role wherever he went and was not just as president of the United States but with his own interest capacities and intellectual understanding of these issues as well as his own personality. He was very gregarious, very open, a good listening ear, full of ideas, wanting to understand where people were coming from and talk to them and wanting to find ways to build relationships based on understanding derived from that kind of approach.

Of all the presidents that I had seen operating first hand, he was certainly the best at dealing with foreigners. Then, while I didn't spend a lot of my time in that part of the world I watched the India relationship perhaps more closely. He was remarkably adept at understanding that region as well. His trip to India and his speech to the Indian Lower House were all huge accomplishments

in terms of turning around a relationship which ought to have been turned around much earlier. Over the Cold War years there was lots of festering. Under Clinton it had begun to move and he added real impetus to the moment. Interestingly enough, under Bush 43 the policy on India did not change radically and the relationship was further improved.

*Q: And also the timing may have been good because the Indian leaders were of a certain ilk and they were changing too.*

PICKERING: Of course India changed despite its tendency somehow to seem to be immutable. Every Indian understood the new balance in the world situation beginning with the collapse of communism where they had been able to play a balancing role or take advantage of the tensions in the region -- Russia, China, the U.S. -- to develop relationships which allowed them not to be heavily under the thumb of any one country. They worked to seek out real alternatives as they moved ahead. Then suddenly a big chunk of this fell away, so they had to reestablish their footing on a different basis. Their choices were China or the United States. They had enough difficulties and problems with China, but even so they attempted slowly to build back that relationship. With the United States they saw opportunities. They didn't want to do it at the expense of either their independence or their own national feelings and it took quite a while to ginger that along. But I think India as an old civilization was prepared to take time to deal with problems; it doesn't necessarily feel that it has to meet a kind of American time scale in dealing with issues.

*Q: One last question before we finish this session Tom. What about how much was Russia turning into an Asian power or was it really?*

PICKERING: I think that is a very interesting question. For Russia, Asia is still a kind of backdoor preoccupation with the exception of China and the long border. China is seen as an opportunity on the business side and potentially a security threat. But Moscow, which is where it counts, still tends to think of its self in a European context, in a European cultural context, in a look west to relationships, to look west to problems and to look west for opportunities. Nevertheless, it has learned also to manage its China relationship. With the willingness of the Chinese to resolve the border disputes, with the opportunities for Russian raw materials -- hydrocarbons in particular, to play an increasing role in the China economy and with the Chinese, at least temporarily dependent on the Russian's for first line military equipment -- everything from destroyers to fighter aircraft that has built in a stronger relationship.

The Russians have remained very cautious about a relationship with the Chinese, which could well become a new super power. They are always concerned about the fact that they have this huge empty space in Siberia, particularly to the east of Lake Baikal, which the Chinese could fill almost by walking in to it. It is a rich space full of natural resources. They were concerned, but the Chinese have been quite respectful of that and have not tried to overturn or work around Russian control over Siberia. There is still a vacuum there however. In the meantime, the Chinese and the Russians worked out their border disagreements in a reasonable and fair basis, something that the Russians have not been willing to do with Japan.

*Q: I was wondering on that Japanese thing. That's been the greatest gift we've ever had, the fact that the Northern Islands...*

PICKERING: Northern Territories...

*Q: ...that the Soviets are now, or Russians, haven't settled this, which has kept Japan happily in our orbit, which could have been a little, bit shakier.*

PICKERING: Yes. I think that there is no question at all that the Russians have had strong racial prejudices about China and to the same extent to Japan, less about Korea interestingly enough. I didn't meet any Russian in the Far East among the provincial leadership that wasn't very concerned by China and its population along their border. They all fully supported their "legitimate occupation" of the end of the Kurile Island Chain. It was something that they would not give up lightly. That also played into the deep Russian concern that with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the hiving off of these republics. They wanted to stop this progression of that kind of activity. Several elements played a role in this thinking; one was that they didn't want to give up the islands because that opened the door, set a precedent perhaps, possibly to more people breaking away from the Russian Federation. They were much more concerned by the Muslims in the European areas, which are much closer -- in around the Volga -- where they were deeply concerned that there would be efforts to have pieces split off. When I arrived in Russia in '93 there was continued deep concern that there might even be efforts to try to establish again some kind of Far Eastern Republic as there was in the '20s in Siberia. That was more true in Moscow. Not much of that really played very strongly locally in Siberia because the Russians out there were as attached to Russia and Russian nationalism as the rest -- but there was still concern.

*Q: Okay, well Tom this is a good place to stop. We will pick this up we are going to turn to Africa and to Latin America.*

PICKERING: Absolutely.

*Q: Okay.*

PICKERING: Happy to do so.

*Q: Okay, today is the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2009. Tom, as I said we are going to turn to Africa and to Latin America. How stood things from your perspective of the seventh floor and Africa during the time you were there?*

PICKERING: We had a lot of conflicts and difficult relationships going ahead in Africa. We had during the course of the almost four years that I was under secretary a conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea on which a lot of time was spent trying to put back in place both by the African bureau, by Tony Lake, who came in to help out and in close cooperation with the Algerians who played an intermediary role. Susan Rice at State managed that well and we would speak about it from time to time. There was a long-standing dispute over some territory along their borders and this led to a pretty nasty and very damaging conflict.

*Q: This must have been frustrating and God damn annoying wasn't it? I mean...*

PICKERING: You know the United States doesn't get a chance to pick the world in which it lives and decide every issue, so it was part of the situation in the region and we had to put up with and work with if we wanted to see a resolution. To say that we had vital interest at stake is probably an exaggeration, but we were, nevertheless, interested in not seeing the situation deteriorate in the Horn of Africa, where certainly Ethiopia under Meles Zenawi was a lot better for us than his predecessor...

*Q: Mengistu.*

PICKERING: Haile Mariam Mengistu. While Eritrea had become independent with the acceptance of the Ethiopians after the disappearance of Mengistu, Isaias Afwerki who ran Eritrea was a very determined nationalist. Trouble brewed up between them around the border. That became a problem. Neither country or neither leadership was in a position of being antagonists of the United States or necessarily deeply unfriendly to the United States. We saw a problem, some horrendous fighting, and a long and difficult negotiations process leading to a general agreement on the boundary. Following that there was a demarcation which then led to more disputes over the actual location of the border markers which continue to this day.

*Q: Was the United States sort of considered about the only honest broker in town? Or you mentioned the Algerians, how did they...*

PICKERING: The United States was seen obviously as an important player, but not the only broker in town. Indeed, it was the Algerians who helped to play a more subtle and I think a more effective and useful role in the process by their getting engaged. The trust of the Algerians was equal at least to what it was of the United States. I was not deeply engaged but from time to time obviously consulted with Susan Rice who was then in the Africa bureau in those days, with Gayle Smith who ran the NSC part of the Africa process. I don't and now if I ever saw Tony in the process or not, but basically we stayed in touch through Susan and Gayle and from time to time we would sit down and discuss what they faced -- what the stalemate was -- and some ideas for a path forward. But there are all kinds of add-on problems too. Once you got an agreement, the UN put peacekeeping in, and getting peacekeepers was not easy. The Canadians played an important role. The border situation remained, put it this way, unquiet for a long period of time and certainly no one wanted to see a new round of fresh mass killing which is what border war between the Ethiopian-Eritrea tended to amount to.

*Q: It turned quite nasty.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: What was in it for the Algerians? The Algerians certainly have their troubles at home but why were the Algerians such a major player?*

PICKERING: The Algerians had developed over the years a fairly robust diplomacy with some significant individuals that were very capable. I think a combination of their own experience, their own approach to life, a reasonably good university system and a close connection with European education for a lot of them helped them in that role in Africa. But people like Lakhdar Brahimi who had been foreign minister had a reputation -- richly deserved as a very intelligent, a very careful individual who was prepared to look at problems in a very objective way and see if we could find ways to resolve them. He would understand particularly how to deal with his Arabic speaking friends around the world, but was not necessarily limited to that. Lakhdar didn't I believe, play a major role in the Ethiopian-Eritrean problem; he had long since left the foreign ministry. But there were successors in the foreign ministry who had significant capabilities in dealing with these problems. They were willing quietly to pair with us and others to things resolved them. Algeria also felt it had an African vocation and was interested in doing it in that context. The traditional tensions between Muslim, Arabic speaking North Africa and Sub-Saharan and the rest of Africa were something that they wanted to overcome much as the Egyptians did. Boutros-Ghali before he became secretary general of the United Nations had been the key Egyptian-African hand and played quite an extensive role. Libya's long standing interest in Africa and Qadhafi's interest in some of his neighbors had led to playing a different role.

*Q: During your time Libya was the troublemaker?*

PICKERING: Libya was a troublemaker and we'd had problems in Chad off and on over the years with Libya playing a role because of its claims to the Aouzou strip in northern Chad on the Libyan border. I don't know that we had any particularly harsh blow ups then, we had problems just kind of moving mentally down the geography. Between Sudan and South Sudan, we had an on-going continuing warfare that had not yet been patched up.

*Q: Were we able to interject ourselves in the Sudan at this time?*

PICKERING: Not very effectively. We'd had a lot of problems with Sudan. One of the things that happened was that at one point the agency from a single source had gotten multiple reports of a serious danger to our embassy in Khartoum. Our relationship with Sudan had never really been very good and this was in the first part of the Clinton administration. We pulled the plug and our presence was removed. I felt when I came that this was not a wise idea. A lot of people felt emotionally very strongly about the way in which the Sudanese government had misbehaved. There was no doubt about that at all. But some also felt that the removal of our embassy, for essentially security reasons which turned out to be false, had to be kept closed as an expression of disapproval. We'd also had a process where Osama bin Laden had been present in Sudan and under our pressure left and went to Afghanistan; not necessarily the wisest of all possible moves and this is a short hand description of a very complicated and difficult period of time. Of course, during the period we had the attack on our embassies in East Africa that led to growing deep concern about what the Sudanese role was.

*Q: We are talking about our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.*



PICKERING: Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. And some had thought there was a Sudanese connection with some of the al Qaeda people that put them back into the network of Osama bin Laden.

We took a look at it in a very close council over at the White House, particularly when it became clear that we had an opportunity after the embassy bombings in mid-August with the production of new information to move militarily against Osama. It looked quite good that that Osama bin Laden was going to attend a meeting in or around one of the training camps in Afghanistan not far from Pakistan. We had enough information to put Tomahawk strikes in and there was a question as to whether a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan had also been engaged in making chemicals weapons or chemical weapon precursors particularly for nerve gas. From a source, possibly from a north African country, maybe controlled by that country, we had an earth sample taken from nearby the plant gate that was processed by a number of chemical laboratories, very reputable ones in the United States. They found an artificial precursor -- it is not known to occur in nature -- called EMPTA. It was a precursor of an important nerve gas in this soil sample and several labs verified it. Whether this was cooked up by somebody, is hard to know but there was enough to go on there for us to advocate to the president that if we were going to strike the camps, that the factory in Sudan was also a possible target. There was enough evidence to indicate it was a reasonable target. Happily, we hit it at a time when there was nobody or only one person there, so that the damage to human life was very small, but the damage to the factory was significant. Subsequent investigations turned up no evidence of nerve gas activity or precursors at the site in so far as anyone could tell. We didn't have direct access but that was, of course, a major question between the U.S. and Sudan.

*Q: In one of my interviews I can't remember which one somebody said that this attack on the training camp went through the committee process and they decided to do it at a certain time when actually people had left already.*

PICKERING: Well what happened -- it was very complicated. I don't know if we've talked about this or not. I was involved in the "small committee" and our intelligence people who were there were deeply concerned as well. I had asked questions and looked at the information that had been turned up by the agency analysts. I was satisfied at that point at least that the information in terms of the scientific examination of the sample was persuasive. Whether or not that was reliable evidence was something the agency said they felt it was, although their record of reliability of agents in Sudan turned out more questionable

In turning to the camps, what happened was we had located the camp where Osama was supposed to appear plus several others and we put them on the target list. Our big problem then was what to do about dependents of Americans in Pakistan. We expected that some Pakistani's who were part of the camp structure because the camp structure also prepared people to go into Kashmir on a different kind of operation against the Indian control of Kashmir -- they would themselves be very unhappy about this.

*Q: Your Indian connection keeps coming up doesn't it?*

PICKERING: In one way or another yes. So what we did was to send Joe Ralston who was maybe then vice chief of the Joint Chiefs before he became NATO commander, an Air Force four star, who knew Jehangir Karamat, the chief of Army staff in Pakistan very well. He went over to see Jehangir on very short notice and had dinner with him and the scenario was that we wanted to prevent the Pakistanis, if they saw 80 Tomahawks coming over their country, from believing that this was an Indian attack and both India and Pakistan at that point had nuclear weapons. We did not want them to jump the gun and assume that an attack from India was happening. So the scenario was that at a certain time during dinner Joe would tell General Karamat that we had launched these missiles against targets in Afghanistan.

What happened, of course, was that the withdrawal of our employees from the Embassy in Islamabad obviously sent a message that something was up, even although we tried to couch it in the terms of general problems in the area and miscellaneous reports of danger to our personnel in Pakistan. I was in a particularly difficult situation because I had family members among the employees in Pakistan, and without my having to raise the question Sandy Berger had called me and said what do we do about the employees in Pakistan? So it was an easy thing for me to say, "Well, I think we should get them out and we can get them out before the strike is to be mounted." I don't think we delayed the strike because we had this other operation to get Joe Ralston in to tell General Karamat what was going on. I had to call Tom Simons, who was the ambassador, and he was obviously irate and very upset. I said, "You don't have a choice, this is what you need to do," without telling him more than that which I couldn't do at that point because operational security on this particular issue was held as closely as we could hold it. But the big gaping wound in our operation was security and that suddenly we began moving Americans out of Pakistan and we couldn't keep that quiet. We talked about it and did so in full knowledge that it might provide a tip off, but that we had to protect our people. Islamabad had been the scene of riots against us in the past. We had to do it within 24-hours or something of that sort. We had a view that if Osama bin Laden was half way intelligent and was following what was going on, he wouldn't have stay in one place. But his modus vivendi was always not to stay one place very long anyway. So whatever happened, I don't think to this day we know whether he ever showed up at the meeting. Even if he did, he didn't stay very long. What happened is that strike killed a number of people at the camps who were trainees. A lot of them were Pashtuns -- a number of them were Pakistani's and, of course, that didn't help with the Pakistanis that they were suddenly caught with their pants down in terms of the fact that these people were trainees oriented toward Kashmir or against the United States. They were all part of the al Qaeda training system.

*Q: Going back to sort of the Horn of Africa how about Somalia?*

PICKERING: Well Somalia remained a mess. I think for a large part of that period of time we were able to stay away from involving ourselves in Somalia. Somalia was then engaged, in what I would call the post-U.S. presence period. There was a good bit of internal strife -- people in Baidoa did not agree with people in Mogadishu nor did they agree with people up in Berbera. You had the growth of what now had become the sort of semi-independent satrapies in Somalia around some of the major areas. There was already beginning to appear in the North, in old British Somaliland a bunch of people who tended to be more western in their orientation and maybe more careful and maybe even more slightly democratic in the creation of a kind of new

Somaliland. You had the growth of something called Puntland and to folks down in the South particularly around Mogadishu it was the kind of war that I would call a combination of the tribes and the criminal elements to see who could control what piece of the trade and what piece of whatever was lucrative in what was going on in Somalia. It was interesting too -- not realized at the time and maybe some of this took place later -- but with the loss of any governmental control in Somaliland, a number of the fairly predatory international fishing companies and countries took advantage of having no control over the economic zone I think to seine up most of the fish.

*Q: We are talking about Russia, Japan...*

PICKERING: Well mainly the Japanese and some of the others. I don't know exactly who was involved, but this was a lucrative fishing ground that was fished out very quickly. That meant that the coastal fishermen lost their capacity to operate and so, at least, that's one theory as to why we have such rampant piracy. These guys turned to other occupations.

*Q: It does draw up this thing that every once and awhile we say the place is a mess, the hell with it. With Somalia we did this in a sense during the Bush II administration beginning with the whole Palestine-Israel thing.*

PICKERING: Well I think we did under a more devastating change.

*Q: It doesn't work at least from our part, does it?*

PICKERING: Well I think disconnection from serious international problems has its own malign rewards. The United States has broad interests, but none of these are what one would call existential interests -- still they all begin in some way or another impact. We have obviously what I would call the amplification through the press of world events all around so that over a period of time it is in reassuringly hard for the United States to say we have no interest in any place at all where people are dying, where destruction occurs, where economic life ends or is severely harassed or damaged. We have in the United States now populations, many of them refugees from lots of these places, who now feel they have a right in the United States, as indeed they do, to play a role in influencing our government about what to do with regard to the places from which they came. We have a serious problem emerging as we speak in a place like Sri Lanka. Most Americans don't know where it is but we have citizens from both sides, Tamils and Sinhala, a lot of Tamils here. They are lobbying very hard because they see, in fact, the Tamil population of that country under enormous pressure. We have some of that in Somalia and so there are all sorts of reasons why we get involved even places in where we would like to turn our back.

*Q: Well looking at the Sudan for example. Did you feel the influence of sort of the north-south division that the north was essentially Muslim and the south was Christian/Animist? As soon as you missionaries into the mix I know we got involved in that in Biafra as you recall back in...*

PICKERING: They were in South Sudan -- there were some elements that looked like the Biafra equation. Biafra, of course, was different because the war was not just between Muslims and

Christians mainly but not exclusively Roman Catholic but the whole eastern part of Nigeria. Many of the Yorubas were Christians and played a role in preserving their sense of the union. Well Biafra was Igbo and also Christian, so that it was a mixed war. While there was some obvious propaganda interest in emphasizing Muslim's from the north putting down poor Christians that was not at all the reality in that case. The leadership on the federal side was as much Christian as it was Muslim.

*Q: But you did, of course, get the Beatles and other major players.*

PICKERING: No, but I can recall that was a funny situation because at the time I lived in Tanzania and Tanzania was supporting a very important revolt in Mozambique against the Portuguese, which led to some pretty nasty stuff between Portugal and Tanzania. FRELIMO was the liberation organization for northern Mozambique and perhaps beyond. At the same time Tanzania and Portugal were both joined in providing relief and indeed some military support to Biafra; so you had different configurations for different purposes.

*Q: Well did you feel you had any of that going on in the Sudan while you were undersecretary?*

PICKERING: I think we did; I didn't follow the problem closely, but it was very clear that there was a very strong Christian missionary interest in southern Sudan that continues. It plays a big role in people's relationships and alliances. There was no question at all that even in those days Omar Bashir and the Muslim, Arab government of Sudan had wavered between fundamentalists and military and military-fundamentalists. It was a set of relationships which didn't help to bring them into a close relationship with the United States and among our public and institutions. Of course, that's all shifted to Darfur now where you have the problem of Muslims fighting against a tribal set of minorities of their own religion at least in part, even more egregiously in the eyes of many people. I think that's probably correct. While at the same time you had a significant amount of work by a number of Americans, including a former senator who is at the UN, John Danforth, who helped put together a peace agreement between the north and south. We had all kinds of equities at stake.

When I was under secretary what was going on was in the view of many a lot more clear-cut. That is, Bashir and his crowd had supported Osama bin Laden; I'm not sure how much. It was at least to the degree in which it was alleged that the United States embassy had become a key terrorist target. That turned out not to be true. We had as a result pulled out Embassy out and put it down in Nairobi. I argued for a return of relationships and saw a number of the Sudanese at times when they came here There was a very clear and definite view both in the bureau with Susan Rice and then in the White House with Sandy that this would be a horrible mistake. Over a period of time I managed to get the officers who were in effect the embassy in exile in Nairobi back to Khartoum and we managed to get people in. And over a period of time we began to think that there would be some possibility of intelligence liaison contacts with the Sudanese to help us after the attack on the East African embassies -- to spade up information on people that they knew about who may have been responsible or may be responsible in the future for such attacks.

So there were shifting reasons to do this. But it took a little bit of time. It showed me, at least, that closing embassies as a sign of irritation is usually a self-damaging proposition -- that

embassies under stress and siege have to be cut way down and people pulled out. But I had exactly the same problem in Dushanbe in Tajikistan, which at the time was also a country engaged in civil strife. Dushanbe was not itself in a wartime state -- that was in Badakhshan province and other regions of Tajikistan along the Afghan border. There was strong pressure from our security people, particularly after Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, to pull out. Our Embassy was in a hotel and the offices were within range of an attack by explosives. We at one point had the ambassador located in Almaty. I asked the ambassador, Robert Finn, and, in fact, gave him direct orders and he carried them out. I said I don't want the embassy in Dushanbe free of an American presence any day of the week, at any given time, even if it is only one person; we need to keep open our contacts. The concern was the embassy and some of the people residing in a hotel and we couldn't provide a 100-foot setback with absolute certainty. I said, "Move people in and out, do whatever you have to do to become a non-target, reside elsewhere or on the other side of the hole, provide what security you can, use another facility if you can find one, but I want to see us there. Our facilities were certainly not well placed in security terms. Having continued our relationship with the authorities in Tajikistan it became an enormously important place for us when we did go into Afghanistan at the end of 2001, to have had those relationships and to have been able to work with them.

*Q: Well there is the thing we both know having worked with the government, the CYA, Cover Your Ass. If you get an American killed or you put them in harm's way you feel bad about it obviously, but also you are considered culpable almost. At the same time, how do you carry on normal work?*

PICKERING: Well this was something that folks who did the embassy of the future report concentrated on. My good friend and successor, Marc Grossman, was chairman of that project. I thought he and the group, I was a member of the group, came up with the valuable idea that we had to go from risk avoidance to risk management if we were going to be present in difficult places. There were things that we could do over and above we were doing.

One of the things that has happened over the years and certainly most of it since I was an ambassador was that we developed counter surveillance techniques and tactics with our friends in the intelligence community. In some cases we created local counter surveillance teams and in many cases, I think particularly with one-person posts, we could teach people some of the techniques. We could also, in fact, have in those kinds of posts -- where we get great advantage from having one person in a small provincial city, but also don't have to have that person there perpetually or continuously -- allow those people to move away if there is any serious threat that turns up in intelligence.

Of course, a lot of our safety depends on our ability to work with local police and local intelligence collectors and things of that sort. So you can build into a system a very low profile presence. A lot of good local security can take you well beyond where we are or have been. Nothing is ever a certainty, we will never have a certainty, but good security can help you manage the risk a great deal better than we have. We should be doing that under all circumstances as well as building in the extra elements of security. We now have reached a situation where people both in Kabul and in Baghdad say, in fact, we have no relationships with anybody, we sit in some bunkers somewhere.

*Q: Yeah, well they talk to each other.*

PICKERING: Yes, they talk to each other and I don't think that is where we want to be. We may have to be there for more policy management reasons than other kinds of things, but it's bad. The situation in Khartoum was emblematic of that. We also have a strain in American diplomacy, I think it began even before the thirties, but it was also something that grew up in the '30s. We took American values and some of our moral attitudes and translated those in a somewhat malign way that said we don't deal with bad people. We, because of the points you made, no longer have the luxury of not dealing with difficult and bad people. Somehow over the period of time the notion that once we start dealing with people we create an American Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval -- therefore we only deal with people of whom we approve. Or, all the people we deal with have our approval all of which is totally crazy, but somehow it has gotten caught on and politicians are concerned about domestic blowback if we deal with 'bad' people, even if it is in our interest to do that. Iran is pertinent here. So therefore withdrawal from contacts is equated with withdrawal of approval. Of course, with some of this it comes from the traditional notion that if you had a very serious dispute with somebody that you couldn't resolve and it was likely to lead to conflict, withdrawal of your ambassador was an important sign. But that was not a moral signal. It tended to be what I would call a practical political signal that things were getting worse. It didn't mean necessarily you would cut off all relationships -- you would just reduce the level of contact.

*Q: Your ability to deal, you take your top personnel....*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: It's crazy.*

PICKERING: Well it is in many terms, although even if you take your top personnel out you often leave a very capable second person in charge but it's not the same.

*Q: But it's not the same.*

PICKERING: But it is a decision that says we need to send a signal not create a moral position.

*Q: Maybe we should fly the flag at 3/4s mast. I was just talking something sort of on this line to George Staples yesterday about the time he was ambassador to Cameroon. He was saying that they always had a problem with their human rights report. But he felt by this time the human rights report was counterproductive; that okay you are coming out with a bad human rights report and that the people in the Cameroon or wherever it is if they had a problem, would say okay well there will be a little huff and puff for a week or so and then it's the same thing each time. Then we'll get down to business but it does sort of sour relations and it doesn't seem to work. I don't know; do you have any thoughts about that?*

PICKERING: I have mixed feelings on it. I think that human rights report was an interesting development. It gave us an opportunity to look and see what countries were doing and to

publicize it. It was not a publication of everything necessarily. It is an incentive to change -- sometimes it's an incentive to dig in and to protest. I think there was a super arrogation of power on the part of the United States or at least of moral rectitude. Happily, in one circumstance, the Chinese just produced a thousand page human rights report on the United States full of wild exaggerations, but some of the passages are apparently pretty damning. My own view would have been is we would have been a lot stronger in our human rights report, if we did one on ourselves the first time and said these are our problems, these are the things we are doing to deal with the problems rather than to say everybody else is totally wrong and why don't we forget about ourselves. Now, we have had the UN human rights people visit us and talk about it. They've produced reports that are quite devastating in some cases. So, in effect, if we can't accept it ourselves or don't treat it as serious, why should we expect others to. Then others basically say this is just a slam-bang on us. Other countries sometimes have governments which are less than ideal and do nasty and unhappy things. To some extent saying that publicly may help to bring some pressure and we may find real examples of governments willing to change.

Our first approach should have been to say we've looked at it; we've brought people in both from inside and outside our government and here Mr. Foreign Government here is our comment and here are things we hope you would take on, and we should do that maybe six, eight, ten months ahead. Then say to them after the 8-10 months what have you been able to do and we will include those in the report so that, in fact, the report is an on-going record of diplomatic activity rather than merely a signboard.

*Q: George Staples was saying that it seemed to be a repeat each time.*

PICKERING: It is.

*Q: Things never went away and they said such and such has been taken care of.*

PICKERING: So we didn't, we had trouble recording what we would call distinct progress and there was a tendency to be repetitive. Of course, there was a huge battle between the human rights folks in the functional bureau and the regional bureaus. The functional bureau was very close to the NGOs. The NGOs introduced data which at times was questionable, but often which was new. You had to find a way to distinguish between the two and the regional bureau whose views George was expressing and the embassies, that didn't want to do any of this because it just represented another, unhappy episode in our relations with country X.

Now somewhere there is a mean between these and I had a role as something of a semi-arbiter in this at times in the department. I had to caution the regional bureaus that they couldn't go and totally emasculate the human rights report, but I also had to say to the human rights bureau that they couldn't repeat the same verbiage year after year if the countries had actually moved or changed. It was either going to get better or worse and they should reflect that. They couldn't be the unquestioning shields for the NGOs, some of whom were extremely good and some of whom didn't mind some exaggeration if it meant that their particular issue was going to be pushed. It was very interesting bureaucratically and Africa was perhaps most impacted with that.

At then Harold Koh was the head of the HR bureau then. I said to him, clear out with the regional bureaus absolutely everything you can. After that bring it to me. I will work with you and them on finding an answer. He was good and brought me relatively few things. They were not easy, but together we found answers as to how to report the disputed or conflicted material.

*Q: Well Tom I know you've got to go, can we go a little more?*

PICKERING: Let's go another five or ten minutes if we can. We are only beginning to scratch the surface and we have a lot to go on.

*Q: Let me stop first for one quick minute. Tom, why don't we look at the Maghreb before we turn to...*

PICKERING: To Southern Africa.

*Q: ...Southern Africa. Particularly how stood Libya at the time you were doing this?*

PICKERING: Libya at the time we had begun the first effort -- very closely held -- to respond and contact us both through the agency and the bureau in the Department. The Libyan intelligence authorities had given us some indication that they wanted to talk about ways to move things forward. So it was the very earliest stage of what later developed in a more robust basis. The UK was also involved,

*Q: Did you feel at the time certainly under the Bush II administration there was this strong movement that came out of, I guess, the neocons you don't talk to bad guys. Was there a sort of fear of stirring up this particular emotion?*

PICKERING: No, we felt very strongly with respect to Libya was that we had done a number of things with respect to Libya -- I had been involved in the UN earlier with the Libya sanctions resolutions as a result of a bombing of PanAm 103 and a UTA African air flight in which the wife of our ambassador ...

*Q: Bonnie Pugh.*

PICKERING: ...Pugh had been killed. We took that seriously. Then during the course of time a couple of people in the Department, both David Welch who was IO and a guy by the name of Peter Fromuth in SP, Peter had worked for me at the UN, had come up and propounded the thought that we could get some closure and increase some pressure if we could get a couple of the suspects for trial. They came up with this very useful idea of using The Hague as the location and moving a Scottish court there because we began to get indications that the Libyan's were prepared to consider a trial.

*Q: The Scottish Court being where the plane had crashed...*

PICKERING: Because the plane had crashed in Scotland...



*Q: It was sort of logical.*

PICKERING: ...so the Scottish court could have jurisdiction. It took a special effort by the Dutch and the British to do this, but they did and some difficult negotiations with the Libyans, as you know, and then Libya offered up the two men. We had in the meantime some fairly significant evidence. I was surprised that the court let one of them go. I didn't follow the court proceedings closely, but worked off and on when it came up to my level and then certainly with Madeleine Albright. At the same time, we had to deal with the families and that was a tough and difficult management job. The families were not united in terms of their views on this.

*Q: But they were very active.*

PICKERING: They were very active if I would have been....

*Q: Yeah, fair enough.*

PICKERING: ....it's no criticism against them. But it did get put together and it did move so it was another pressure point on Libya. In the meantime, the UN sanctions had a useful and positive effect. Qadhafi at some point during this period began to get the message and began to explore whether there was a way out of the box he had built around himself. He wasn't doing well in oil exports, although the Europeans had oil relationships with him. The rest of the world did not. He couldn't acquire much in the way of modern military equipment. He had bought a lot of Soviet stuff, which wasn't doing him any good. In the meantime, conditions in Libya were not continuing to improve, but to deteriorate.

*Q: The Libyans had been fishing in troubled waters particularly in Africa for a long time using subsidies and...*

PICKERING: Well the Libyans were certainly deeply concerned when we bombed them in whatever it was in '86 or '87.

*Q: This was when Reagan launched this raid, which seemed to...well it worked and it didn't work. It set up the Pan Am 103...*

PICKERING: Well people think it certainly did set up Pan Am 103 and maybe the UTA flight as well. I don't know why because the French didn't give us permission to fly over France to attack Libya. But somehow they got wound up in this too. He wanted to come back and say you can't do this to me kind of thing. Of course, he got himself into a deeper hole by doing it and we were able to create the pressure on him and ratchet it up another stage under Bush I at the UN and other things. Then later at the end of the second half of the Clinton administration, we were able then to open the door to possible closure, if I can put it that way, through a trial in the Netherlands. That's basically all you can say about Pan Am 103. We set up a process which met over long period of time and just until recently led to family compensation which never in any way at all altered people's ideas about the disaster and who was responsible, but at least registered culpability.

*Q: During the time you were undersecretary Libya was no longer a troublemaker particularly?*

PICKERING: I think it had moved from being an active troublemaker -- La Belle disco, bringing airplanes down -- to being a kind of passive one. We were concerned that the Libyans were supporting movements to overthrow the government in Chad. Then once again they had been pushed out of Chad, but one saw evidence of the fact that they used a lot of money to do these things. But I was in a position later where the gears were shifting and it was hard for us to know. It was hard for us to change our traditional view that Libya was a very bad actor. In the end, it was not so hard that we couldn't overcome it with respect to things like bringing the Pan Am to closure and looking down the road to see whether there was a way to do a couple of other things -- to get them engaged in an intelligence exchange to deal with terrorist issues. They knew a good deal at least about one piece of that. But also to get them out of the nuclear business and to get them out of the missile business as much as we could. Then there were, of course, always opportunities for the American petroleum firms and others; a company I later worked with -- for Boeing to sell airplanes. So the potential positives were not so enormously pressing that they in any way at all allowed us to short circuit on the negatives, but they were there.

*Q: Were those C-130s still sitting in Georgia?*

PICKERING: I think so.

*Q: How did we view Qadhafi? I mean was he nuts or was he clever?*

PICKERING: I think we viewed him as a combination of a bit of a screwball, but could be wily and somewhat nasty and had some capability to influence things in Africa and elsewhere because he had a lot of money that came out of his oil business. He wanted and did play an interesting role in Africa over a period of time. He had more credibility in Africa because he was more generous to Africans.

*Q: He certainly had very strong support because of what he had done with South Africa.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Mandela never forgot and fair enough because he did give support to Mandela.*

PICKERING: He did give support for Mandela's release. He played a positive role in the eyes of Africans in many areas of Africa. Part of that we didn't like at all because his popularity in Africa was something we didn't really think was in our interest. On the other hand, if you looked around after that time, he played a major role in getting the Organization of African States to transform itself forward to the African Union. It was quite fascinating. So he's a very interesting person in this whole context and one that doesn't necessarily read easily in a black and white context -- which we Americans like to look at. He had some very mixed virtues and a huge number of unhappy features.

*Q: Okay Tom, we'll stop here and I'll put we are returning to Africa. We've talked about the Horn of Africa; we've talked about the Sudan, we've talked about Libya.*

PICKERING: Qadhafi a little bit, not quite the whole thing.

*Q: We still have to talk about basically...*

PICKERING: About Algeria and Morocco.

*Q: Algiers and Morocco and then we will turn around. Great.*

*Okay, today is the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2009. I was looking at our records Tom and we are in April two days from now we will be in our sixth year of doing this.*

PICKERING: My God.

*Q: Of doing this and catching you from time to time. Anyway, the last time we covered the Sudan and Ethiopia and so we are ready to turn to the Maghreb.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: You were again undersecretary from when to when?*

PICKERING: This was from April of 1997 until the end of 2000.

*Q: You know from the American point of view how did we view sort of the Maghreb at that time?*

PICKERING: At the highest levels we saw Morocco as a very close friend with a miserable problem in Western Sahara that we were all struggling to try and deal with -- not very effectively. Algeria was tremendously important from the point of view of oil resources and energy. By that time that it had not yet begun to undergo the kind of conflicts with the extreme radical Islamic organizations.

*Q: Had they had the election? That crucial election that...*

PICKERING: I forget, I don't really remember.

*Q: Is this the one the Islamist's won and they called it null and void.*

PICKERING: The Islamist's won and the military told them they could not take over and we encouraged the military to push back. Then, of course, Tunisia was quite friendly; the president, Ben Ali, was kind of a mixed blessing in many ways, but we worked with the Tunisians. In Libya we were struggling to try to find an answer to the combined problems of what to do about the airplane blowups and their obvious effort to go into weapons of mass destruction. Each one of those had its own peculiar story. The tensions that always existed between Algeria and Morocco didn't slacken at the time. Certainly Tunisia and Algeria were never totally comfortable living next door to each other.

*Q: As far as I can recall it never had been the equivalent to the Polisario or anything of that nature; had there been cross border problems?*

PICKERING: Between who?

*Q: Tunisia and Algeria?*

PICKERING: No, I don't think so. Tunisia was small it was fairly liberal. Algeria was conflicted internally and very large so, in effect, the two got along as a small neighbor and big neighbor do.

*Q: Carefully.*

PICKERING: Carefully, yes, with care.

*Q: How porcupines make love.*

PICKERING: Right, with some care.

*Q: Let's look at Algeria first because this is the big presence there. Algerian diplomats had played a crucial role in the settlement of getting our hostages out of Iran.*

PICKERING: Not only that but they played a critical role in the settlement of Eritrea and Ethiopian borders. They were very important in that.

*Q: Why were they so good? Did we have any feel with them?*

PICKERING: Well I think the Algerians had good training and excellent experience. They had a kind of perception of relationships around the world, which was pretty realistic, and they had an ability to be close to a lot of different people without having to bring in a lot of extra baggage to carry on their back.

*Q: Well did you have much contact with the Algerian ambassador?*

PICKERING: Only a little tiny bit. There was a very able man when I was there. I forget his name again, but he obviously represented one of the best in their own Foreign Service, he was very capable.

*Q: Well how did we view the Polisario movement?*

PICKERING: But I don't think we treated it as a movement that had from our perspective serious possibilities, in fact, of staking out independence for the territory. The Moroccans had over the years managed to occupy most of the territory. What they didn't control, they succeeded in isolating off in the desert behind a berm. The UN was present to try and keep the peace while, in fact, there were struggles made to move ahead to try to negotiate the problem. At one point we suggested a former Pakistani foreign minister to be the UN mediator. He was not successful,

Secretary Baker was suggested and was actively engaged and he worked very hard at it, but it is still not settled. The fundamental problem was how and in what way could we find to square the circle. The Moroccan position was that the Spanish Sahara was, in fact, Moroccan and that whatever degree of autonomy or local governance or local rule might come could not in any way at all infringe on the pervasive umbrella, if I can put it that way, of Moroccan sovereignty. The view on the other side was that they had to have an independent state coming out of this operation. There was no real formula that ever succeeded in squaring those two pieces. We had very close relationships with Morocco over the years and continue to do so, closer than with Algeria and that tended to color our overall impression of where the outcome should rest. Algeria of course supported Polisario and they claimed to represent the original inhabitants of the territory after it was abandoned by the Spanish under pressure from Morocco

*Q: Did we see a Polisario state as being viable at all?*

PICKERING: Well that's not the right question to ask because all states that are created are viable by definition. Tell me one that has become unviable and I'll tell you whether this one measures up or not. The truth is that it had limited resources and there were some important mineral resources in Western Sahara and there may turn out to be a great deal more depending on where things go. But at the moment it's those mineral resources and the long term interest in Morocco in that stretch of territory to the south of what has been Morocco proper, but with which they have always had some long standing relationships right down to Mauritania. Those I think are the kinds of things that have made the Moroccans insist that this was irrevocably theirs.

*Q: What was in it for the Algerians?*

PICKERING: The Algerians didn't want necessarily for us to see a larger, more robust Morocco. They had long time developed relationships with many of the tribal units that moved back and forth first across the Algerian Saharan border. I think it was a counter balancing activity for them as much as anything else and maybe in the long run maybe an effort to try to ensure a totally friendly state in that very remote border of Algeria or even open a corridor with or through that territory to the Atlantic Ocean

*Q: Did they see it as absorbing the state?*

PICKERING: No, I don't think that the Algerians at that point were talking about uniting Spanish Sahara or Western Sahara with Algeria. They took the view that these people deserved independence and had fought for independence and that independence ought to be recognized.

*Q: Well did the plight of the prisoners of war I guess in Algeria who had been sitting there in the middle of the desert for years.*

PICKERING: You mean Moroccan prisoners?

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: Well there were long-standing efforts, and I didn't follow these in detail, to exchange and each side had held prisoners as the result of the fighting -- that certainly concerned each side.

*Q: It probably stands right now as the longest prisoners of war going.*

PICKERING: I don't know if there are still some being held or not.

*Q: I don't know; I mean...*

PICKERING: My impression is that some of those people were exchanged or released.

*Q: In a way sort of our ideology is getting in the way of practicality both well in Algeria particularly but probably if we ever came push to shove in Saudi Arabia and maybe Egypt to having a true democracy which might turn Islamist and sort of one final election.*

PICKERING: I think in those days we were not hitched on to the Bush doctrine where we had kind of democracy "uber alles" (over all) except when we didn't like the state involved perhaps!

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: Yes and so, in effect, the Clinton administration was taxed with the same conundrum -- how do you pursue a policy in these countries where popular expression might go in a different direction than where we really want it to go. At the same time, we were often linked up with elections and with honoring the outcome of elections. This was always difficult. As far as I can recall, of course, you had the monarchy in Morocco, which was pretty pervasive and did things that I think in the end certainly human rights groups in the U.S. didn't like and were unhappy about. We tended to try to make peace with the proposition that we were not going to turn either Morocco or Algeria into perfect democracies, nor were we necessarily going to guarantee that only our friends could win elections in those democracies -- we had to live with it.

*Q: But this wasn't a driving force?*

PICKERING: This was not a huge problem that I can recall. Of course, I didn't spend a huge amount of time on these issues. A lot of them were dealt with in those days, I think they were still in the African bureau in those days. They moved in and out in '88 and now I'm not sure.

*Q: I'm not sure where they are even today.*

PICKERING: Yeah, but Libya was by far the most interesting one.

*Q: With Libya at this time were we seeing a beginning of a shift or not? Libya really came up on our radar after the bombing of the nightclub and the downing of Pan Am 103.*

PICKERING: 103 and the Labelle disco and I seem to recall because we talked about when I was at the UN we passed a series of Security Council resolutions putting sanctions on Libya. By

this time obviously people were frustrated that nothing was happening in Libya; a number of very bright people in the State Department were thinking about it. It was beginning to be clear that Qadhafi might accept a trial of a couple of his people if it were not held in an area which he considered prejudicial. I don't know who it was but a couple of people at least have claimed credit for coming up with the idea that we should have a Scottish trial outside of Scotland. So we picked The Hague where the International Court of Justice rests as a place where at least we thought we could get fair justice. Both the Dutch and the British cooperated remarkably and they had to pass laws in Parliament and treaties to get this done. We jointly set up the court and then challenged the Libyans to make the two people we considered to be most vulnerable here, most guilty, available for the trial. That eventually took place and the two guys were surrendered.

In the meantime, very quietly and very few people knew about this we had begun conversations at quite high levels with the Libyans, including with Musa Kusa, the head of their intelligence agency. We wanted to see whether we could get them to help us move on things like trading terrorist information and dealing with other issues, That eventually led to talks that took place in the Bush administration which then turned to their effort to get rid of their nuclear establishment and other research and military activities that we considered to be unacceptable.

*Q: How do we feel about a country like Libya with germ warfare, chemical warfare and nuclear?*

PICKERING: We were concerned. It appeared that the Libyans had not perfected a degree of technical competence or gained sufficient outside aid as to be highly successful in this. But we did intercept things like shipments going from North Korea to Libya with help from others; so we were concerned about it. We also thought that if we could break the back of the Libyans over the Pan Am 103, and maybe over this, successively, then we might actually be able to develop a new relationship. We were interested in seeing if we could, in fact, peel the Libyan's off from their previous perverse attitudes.

*Q: We have Pan Am 103 and we also had the French airliner.*

PICKERING: The UTA.

*Q: Yes, which many of us were touched; I knew Bonnie Pugh. But how did that play with Libya were we leaving that to the French to carry out?*

PICKERING: Well the French carried UTA because it was their airline, but we coordinated very closely and obviously we did things at the UN together so that, in fact, both of us knew that we couldn't be in a position of one side pulling and the other side pushing on this set of activities without full coordination. We had full realization that we had a common objective. But with the French it was an area on which we could cooperate very closely. The French had a little different view on the UTA and so they made a settlement before we did.

*Q: Did we have an ambassador in Algeria at the time?*

PICKERING: Yes, I think we did.

*Q: As I recall, they lived under very difficult circumstances.*

PICKERING: I think particularly they did. I drove from Lagos to Algiers in 1983 and even then the embassy was a little bit under siege although we had no problems. We drove the whole length of Algeria up and back. But later I think it got tougher as, in fact, the militant groups began an armed struggle against the government and it got very nasty particularly out in the mountains and beyond that in the desert. Our embassy was even more kind of a focus of the attack. I don't remember any sequence of events, but there was no question at all that we were very concerned. The embassy was, more or less, within a compound where people had to stay and where, they took families out of there for a while. I don't know if all of that happened during my time or not, I can't recall.

*Q: How would we get intelligence about what was happening, I'm not speaking about covert but just intelligence, what was happening in Algeria? You couldn't go out very much.*

PICKERING: It was hard; you had to find people to talk to. They had limited meetings. All of those things that are in afflicted posts -- that are under that kind of pressure. Certainly Baghdad is the preeminent example today. It isn't very effective because obviously your ability to know what's going on depends on who you can talk to and how much you can get out to do that and how much you can get out to see what is going on.

*Q: Turning over to Morocco. In Morocco in some circles of the Foreign Service I've heard has been sort of the butt of jokes about how particular ambassadors they get sort of captured by the king; they refer to him as our king. Was there a problem when you were doing this with localities or something like that?*

PICKERING: Okay, I think that it was generally kind of a legend in the Foreign Service that Hassan II, in particular wouldn't take any career ambassador because he wanted somebody that was close to the president that he could rely on.

*Q: Dick Parker has talked about this and is quite bitter about this.*

PICKERING: Yes, and to some extent maybe his son Mohammed VI followed a little bit of that. Of course, the White House was always on the lookout for places that it could capture in the 33 or 30 percent that went in the group of political ambassadors. So I don't recall for many years a career ambassador who served in Morocco. Robert Yost was one. Of course, I think that the political ambassadors varied in terms of their experience and their capacity and their judgment. Some were very good and some obviously felt that okay their particular job was to represent the peculiar interest of the king to the American president, given the fact that they were appointed to this very important post and they had to insure that relationships continued to be good. So this led on occasion to charges of lack of objectivity and lack of clarity about what was going on.

Over my time and I don't recall, but I may have visited Morocco once when I was under secretary; I certainly visited when I was at the UN. The ambassador who was there, and I forget exactly who it was, was very competent in my view. He understood the sets of issues well and



didn't seem to me to be leaning too far over one way or the other. He had good relations with the Moroccans; he was able to gather a good crowd of interesting Moroccans to talk around dinner table -- that kind of thing. So I thought things were performing very well.

Morocco was, of course, not at the top of our list either in terms of problem states or necessarily superb friends, although generally speaking it went pretty far up on the friends scale.

*Q: Were there concerns at all that if the monarchy left it might be replaced by a radical Islamic...*

PICKERING: Oh I'm sure there always were, yes, there were radical Islamic parties and there were some in Morocco who were less radical but not necessary monarchists. The monarchy had a very tight hold and it still does on the situation. Of course, the monarchy and the military are closely married together. Years ago, of course, there were times when there were problems within the military long before I got there. I served there in the Navy and before I went out there I think there was, in fact, an attempt or maybe after I was there was an attempt...

*Q: It was a birthday party...*

PICKERING: For the king.

*Q: ...and the king's being in the plane.*

PICKERING: And they tried to shoot his plane down, the Moroccan air force. So there were difficulties and I think most of those seemed to have been overcome by now.

*Q: Well then let's move on down.*

PICKERING: Right.

*Q: I don't think we'll do each country individually. But what about the hump of Western...*

PICKERING: In West Africa I think the major problems were Sierra Leone and Liberia where in both places we had civil wars going on and where it looked for a time as if Sierra Leone could not be rescued. There was a very strong UN peacekeeping effort there, which turned into a very robust effort to try to deal with the rebels. The UN pushed out into the countryside and then tried to control it. In fact, I went to Sierra Leone and Liberia in the summer of 2000, before I left. It was just after the Indians had some troops up in the northeast cut off for a while. These were Indian peacekeepers with an Indian General in charge. The Indians mounted an effective push to go in and get these people out of being surrounded by the rebels and they did it very effectively. I remember seeing the Indian commander when I went there.

At the same time, in Liberia I went to see President Taylor and gave him a very strong message that if he didn't stop misbehaving, which he was doing mightily, we would see that he was brought to book for it. Nothing happened for the rest of the Clinton administration, but I'm delighted to see he's in the hands, finally, of the international criminal tribunal.

*Q: In the first place how was he misbehaving?*

PICKERING: Well I think he was engaged in intervention in Sierra Leone through a combination of thugs and drug traffickers and illicit miners -- diamond miners. He was treating his own people very harshly and they were, of course, trying to deal with insipient revolts in his own country. He was a problem not just within Liberia but also in the neighborhood as a whole.

I can remember going to visit him in what was the elaborate Tubman State House. It was a scene out of a novel. The place was still functioning but barely. I remember joining in a crowd of call girls, who were obviously local call girls, in the elevator going up to see the president. I met with him and the members of his cabinet both in a broader cabinet meeting and then alone. I delivered this very tough message, which he immediately disputed. He said that none of this was true and this was all made up. We very firmly told him it was not and later I met with the press and repeated the message and left town. But Liberia was obviously in huge economic decline, damaged from past fighting which was evident around the city, the embassy was almost hold up on the coast almost like one would have envisioned the small colonial enclaves on the West African coast in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Q: This oral history program is sort of a perennial is a story about evacuating the embassy when the Marines come in. I imagine they got plan, after plan, after plan.*

PICKERING: Well we evacuated Sierra Leone when I was there from the first big push and I believe we had plans to evacuate Liberia, I forget whether we actually did. We had to carry out a very difficult evacuation of Guinea Bissau. A former military leader moved back in to take over the country and there was fighting going on in the capital. We were in touch by phone with the Ambassador and the embassy's sole exit was arranged to go by foot some blocks to the port and board a fishing boat that would take them out to the next country. I spend a good bit of time on the phone talking to the ambassador while she was gathering her people and figuring out what to do. In the meantime, the embassy, as I recall, and some of the nearby embassy housing had begun to take hits from shooting. Luckily, they were able to make this move under very difficult circumstances and get their people out.

*Q: Who was the ambassador, do you know?*

PICKERING: I'm trying to remember the name.

*Q: What?*

PICKERING: I regret, I don't remember the name exactly. We also spent a lot of time working with the West Africans on a peacekeeping operation both in Liberia and to some extent helping out in Sierra Leone. It became a big UN operation although Liberia was in the West African economic community and had its own peacekeeping force. The Nigerians were very prominent in the force. I spent a lot of time, because I had been in Nigeria, with the Nigerians seeing if we could help get a commitment for a couple of additional battalions. We promised to do a number

of things including training, reequipping and trying to get their C-130s back in order which had been out of action for a long period of time for lack of maintenance and spare parts.

*Q: How did we view the Nigerian contingent and the West African peacekeeping thing?*

PICKERING: Well, I think we felt it was not as bad as some and not as good as we had hoped, but that is pretty standard you know. Our expectations are very high for peacekeeping professionals. I went and talked to the Ghanaians too, who had had more experience and maybe they had a little more discipline; they had a smaller military. But at that point they were finishing up Jerry Rawlings time and they had achieved some stability. In the meantime, we had some reports that some Nigerians were good and some were very bad depending upon who was mainly in charge of the unit, who was commanding the battalion, and how well the discipline was enforced.

This was the time of my famous visit to Nigeria with Susan Rice when Chief Abiola died.

*Q: Why don't you talk about that?*

PICKERING: I don't think I've been through that, have I?

*Q: I don't think so.*

PICKERING: I may have done this with Nigeria. You can compare and see if the two are the same stories. No, we went out to talk to the Nigerians; it was an interesting trip.

Earlier on in 1998 at the end of June we had asked for a visa for me to go and visit them. Sani Abacha was the president, a fairly difficult military man who amassed a large personal fortune during his time. He was disreputable and fairly difficult to deal with and with whom, I think, we had at best you could say terrible relations. I had been visiting the Gulf and had hoped to go from the Gulf over to Nigeria. I think it was on a Thursday night they told me in the Gulf that my visa had finally been refused and that was the bad news. The better news was that Sani Abacha died on Saturday night following his refusal of my visa, not that the two had any relationship at all. He died apparently from over exertion and maybe heart failure celebrating with some ladies of the night in his palace He was replaced by a general by the name of Abubakar. So some weeks later I asked to go and see General Abubakar and Susan Rice and I went out.

*Q: She was the...*

PICKERING: She was the assistant secretary for African affairs. We met with General Abubakar. We had agreed when I met with him I would ask him among other things to see Chief Abiola who was a Nigerian political leader. He had run against Sani Abacha who had, according to some vote counts, actually won the election and then been incarcerated by Abacha. He was a Muslim from Lagos, a Yoruba, with a newspaper empire as well as other entrepreneurial adventures. General Abubakar agreed, so we arranged to see him shortly after lunch at a state guesthouse inside the presidential compound. We did and we went there. The caretaker of the guesthouse met us and we sat down. Chief Abiola came in, he recognized me right away. We had

known each other in Lagos. He and I had been, in a sense, co-victims of what we believed to be a Soviet inspired disinformation plot in which the effort was to link him to me in an effort to use subversion to influence Nigerian domestic politics.

*Q: This was the infamous...*

PICKERING: This was an internal Embassy memo...

*Q: ...a memo.*

PICKERING: ...reportedly prepared by one of my cultural officers.

*Q: Upon close examination it didn't hold up.*

PICKERING: It didn't hold up very well. So he remembered that and that we had met on other occasions when I had been ambassador. Our then ambassador, Bill Twaddell was with us too. So we sat in a small grouping in the living room of this state guesthouse and they brought tea in, I didn't drink tea. Bill, Susan and Chief Abiola all took tea. I don't even know if he'd even had a chance to drink it, but we started to speak and exchange views and he became incoherent and distracted. What he said didn't make any sense and he then asked to use the men's room. I believe the servant at the guesthouse pointed out in the corner of the living room there was a door and that was the entry to the men's room. He went over there and was in there five minutes or so. He came out with his shirt off which shocked me because he was a Muslim and Susan was in the room with us. He walked to a sofa between where we were seated and the door he had come from and sat on the sofa and then slumped off the sofa and slid straight onto the floor. We ran over and I grabbed his wrist and checked his pulse. It seemed to me he had a very strong pulse but he was not saying anything.

So, it was Susan who said we should get a doctor right away and we called for a doctor. One of the servants ran and called for a doctor and within a few minutes the doctor came from the presidential clinic located on the same compound. He checked him. He said, "This is very bad." He was a big man well over 200-250 pounds. He said, "You have to help me and the security people here get him into my car and we have to take him to the presidential clinic which is close by." So we did and put him in the back seat. I said, "Get our car, we are going." And knowing Nigeria and that anyone who has worked in Nigeria would realize that the chances were he to die put us in a position of being, in fact, implicated in the death -- certainly us and, the U.S. So I said, "Let's go." We drove to the clinic right behind the doctor. They had taken him into what was obviously an operating room or a treatment room. It had one of those elliptical glass window panels in the door so we could see through. We watched them work on him and saw them use some kind of an electric machine to try to start or stimulate his heart. In about 45 minutes to an hour the doctor, Said Wali, came out and I said to him aside in the hall, "How is it?" He said come outside which we did. He said, "It's not good. I believe he was dead when we got here. We've done everything we can to resuscitate him." He added,, "I think that you should talk to General Abubakar. "We'll do that right away, we have his number." He said, "Yes, I want to tell you I was here and dealt with the Abacha death and the one thing you must do is to insist upon a full autopsy. It's the only way we will have to determine what actually has happened. I won't

venture any guesses, but I think you must have an autopsy.” He, of course, understood the local situation and understood what might happen not just to us if we were seen as responsible but also to him. He was a Hausa-Fulani from his dress and while Chief Abiola was also a Muslim which I presumed was the case with the doctor. The Chief was also a Yoruba and tensions have always existed between them and the northern Hausa-Fulani.

We called General Abubakar and said that Chief Abiola had just died and we needed to come by and see him right away. He said, “Come right away.” We also called the State Department Operations Center, reported briefly what had happened and asked them immediately to find reputable forensic specialists that General Abubakar could use to perform the autopsy.

And we went over to his office. We waited for him a few minutes and he and a couple other people came in and we sat and talked. We talked about what had happened and at their suggestion about how they were going to phrase the announcement and what to say. They did what we suggested, they didn’t seem to have a very strong feel for how to deal with this. So we gave them our best advice, most of which they followed pretty well. Then they said we’ve called his wife and daughter who are here in town -- he had multiple wives. So Susan, the trooper that she was, went and talked to the wife and daughter who were very vehement once they heard that we were involved that we were responsible for his death. They felt that we had somehow played a role in his death. Then Bill and I went in and consoled the wife and daughter, but they were really quite irreconcilable and quite harsh and with very strong feelings. I don’t know the source of their views -- they were prejudiced -- but we did our best to deal with that.

We then made a decision that rather than take our USAF plane out that night we would stay over and fly out the next day; so we could have time to talk with the press at the airport on departure. So, we held off the airplane.

Then we went back to the embassy office in Abuja and began to listen to the news reports, which were dreadful. Susan got on to the wire agencies and I got on to the BBC and other radio outlets and we each gave interviews for the next hour or two. We were able to say we were present and we actually saw what had happened, and to describe precisely what had happened.

We arranged a news conference at the airport.

In the meantime, we had asked General Abubakar to have this autopsy and we had gotten the names of several eminent physicians; one U.S. Air Force medical officer, one the chief forensic pathologist from Ontario and one from the UK. They were invited and they came.

We had a press conference at the airport the next day. In the meantime some rioting had taken place and there had been some damage; I don’t know if some people had been killed or not but some people had been injured certainly in Lagos and places like that where Abiola was well known. We repeated our account, we said very clearly and precisely what had happened.

The autopsy was performed I think within about a week. The physical evidence was that he had this grossly enlarged heart, which had burst. The chemical evidence was that there was no evidence of any poisons or any outside influence of this sort.

*Q: And Susan Rice had also drunk some of the tea too, hadn't she?*

PICKERING: Yeah, Susan had drunk some of the tea and so, I think, had Bill Twadell. But that was the story.

*Q: I imagine you probably kept a closer eye on events in Nigeria than the normal because you had served there.*

PICKERING: Yes, as much as one could.

*Q: How did you feel? Abuja was a pretty nasty character wasn't he?*

PICKERING: Abacha.

*Q: Abacha.*

PICKERING: I didn't have much to do with Abacha frankly. I had many other things going on and Abacha had been in power for some time. I generally watched, but there wasn't much we could do although in the end the AF bureau felt that going out to talk to Abacha was worthwhile. I said, "Okay, if you think so, let's go." That was when we got the visa refusal.

I think with Abubakar we generally established a better relationship. Of course, after Abubakar they decided to hold elections and then General Obasanjo whom I had known, more at the UN actually than I had known in Nigeria, had come back into power. It was disappointment in some ways. He wasn't able to carry the country with him in a way that we had hoped and in a way that would reflect the kind of policies and changes that he had at least ostensibly stood for and that we hoped would be put in place.

*Q: Then moving down to Ghana. How stood things? Was Rawlings still there?*

PICKERING: Rawlings was still there and actually I went to see Rawlings on the same trip that I went to Liberia and Sierra Leone and actually Guinea as well -- all in one day! He was just stepping down when I saw him. He was obviously very pleased with the success. He had established a good relationship with President Clinton. He was, I think, in a way looking forward to leaving office and in a way a little bit nostalgic. But we saw him very early in the morning, not in his office, but at the fort, which was quite an impressive old place and had an interesting discussion. But, I think it was more or less just that.

*Q: Sort of in our outlook from the State Department were we still looking at that part of Africa as being Anglophone or Francophone or was this...*

PICKERING: Well there was no question at all that the language divisions from the colonial days were still quite strong. On that one trip in one day I went from Ghana where I saw Rawlings before breakfast, to see Taylor before lunch, to see President, I guess it was Kabbah of Sierra Leone before dinner and then late in the day to see the president of Guinea who was a former

French Army Sergeant Major, Conte, I think. He just died this last year and he was a very interesting character but not much of what one would call malleability there. So I started in English and ended in French.

*Q: In some ways the Anglophone, at least Sierra Leone and Liberia, were the British and then the American influence hadn't worked out very well. Was it diamonds that screwed things up?*

PICKERING: I think it was tribal differences. In some cases in Sierra Leone those then resolved themselves around who controlled what resources, how much influence there was coming over the border from Taylor in Liberia, and how much from Burkina coming in from that side and how much from Guinea. So it was a convoluted screwed up mess in which you had boy soldiers and savagery, hand chopping and very unhappy set of circumstances to the point where they almost invested Freetown. Then we had great problems getting UN peacekeepers. The UN peacekeepers themselves had serious problems within the countries at times with some of the armed groups. So it was difficult. In Liberia it was a combination of a seesawing civil war with various peacekeeping incursions to try and provide some stability. The Nigerians carried the brunt of the effort, but they were never totally successful. I think that we've now seen probably in 25-years the biggest period of relative calm with Ellen Sirleaf Johnson as the president of Liberia -- after they exhausted themselves with every other kind of savagery.

But I mean it's not to say that the British necessarily brought all this about. Cote d'Ivoire has had some very serious problems. Cote D'Ivoire at that time was on the top of the heap, it was still very heavily French, there were lots of French citizens there; it was their *logement* after the colonial period.

*Q: I'll ask this question although I know the answer. The French for decades thought that we had designs on Francophone Africa, to replace it. How stood we on that?*

PICKERING: Well I think nobody in the United States was prepared to go out and even do peacekeeping. So it was a kind of made up concern. I had huge difficulties to getting four American military officers to join the U.N. peacekeeping contingent in Sierra Leone as a kind of symbolic contribution to let other people know that we were seriously interested. We never achieved it with the Pentagon, even though we made all kinds of promises. So the notion that we had any colonial interest in West Africa had to be fallacious and I don't think serious French people thought it was true...

Q: Probably not.

PICKERING: I mean I think there may have been a commercial competition and I think that with some US firms in French speaking West Africa we may have had more trouble establishing mining concessions. We just really never tried to compete that I know of. Most of the oil concessions that have moved up the West African coast to places like Ghana include US firms but also Europeans. I also suspect that small countries like Togo and Benin and Cote d'Ivoire will eventually also have oil off their coasts, if there is oil, and will also benefit.

*Q: Guinea Bissau has got one.*

PICKERING: Do they?

*Q: I think they...*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: How about let's look at Chad and all. Chad seems to have this war with either an internal revolt or the Libyan's, were they messing around?*

PICKERING: Well when I was there the Chadians had trouble with the Libyans in the north. They had moved south and some of their surrogates had moved south. The Chadians with our and the French help had developed a kind of irregular force which over a period of time was quite successful in marrying the Touareg, the Toyota and the machine gun.

*Q: This is what is known as the Toyota wars.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: It really is quite remarkable. I mean...*

PICKERING: And these folks managed to move across the desert and shoot up the Libyans I guess and drove them back. Then there was the famous; of course, piece of disputed territory between Chad and Libya, part in the Tibesti Mountains, called the Aouzou Strip. It was part of Chad. The Libyans had built a rather large airfield there, in southern Libya and northern Chad, depending upon your political tilt. Over a period of time having gotten beaten with this kind of irregular opposition, the Libyans agreed to withdraw from the undisputed areas of Chad. I don't know what they've actually done with the Aouzou Strip -- it is still be in dispute.

*Q: At this time there weren't any Soviets anyway, was there a complete absence of Russia?*

PICKERING: Almost, I don't think there was a great deal of Russian presence or vigor shown in the process.

*Q: Are there any other spots in this sort of Western Africa that caused problems for us? Gabon or Benin?*

PICKERING: No, I don't think so. Central African Republic was always a kind of an incipient revolt. There were problems in Congo Brazzaville and we had to take our embassy out or down for a while. At other times we had problems in Congo Kinshasa.

*Q: Those were the motorboat evacuations.*

PICKERING: Evacuations across the Congo River, yes.

*Q: How about the Congo? There was this huge entity, which hasn't really found itself yet.*



PICKERING: It was still then in a process of disintegration. Laurent Kabila, the father of the present president, Joseph Kabila, had come back to eastern Congo and was moving west and taking control. Eastern Congo was caught up in the problems with the Hutu's and the Tutsi's and their offshoots coming out of Rwanda. None of that was ever-in firm control in the years after independence. I suppose you at least in terms like the road infrastructure as you looked at it, was at its height when Congo became independent in the early sixties...

*Q: '61.*

PICKERING: ...and it had gone downhill. So much of Congo has gone back into the pre-colonial bush in many ways and eastern Congo, in particular, of course it still remains a huge mess to deal with.

*Q: When you were there were you there during the Rwanda business?*

PICKERING: No, these events came after that.

*Q: Did we have any particular...*

PICKERING: No, it may have come while I was in Russia, I'm not sure. I think it came before while I was in Russia. I mean we all felt the impact of the Rwanda genocide.

*Q: Was there a general feeling that gee we could have done something and we didn't?*

PICKERING: I think in general there was. President Clinton said as much and apologized. Some people felt that had we been willing to extend ourselves it might have helped. But then we were living in the shadow of Somalia and Somalia was living in the shadow of Vietnam, so it was like the famous Russian nested, matryoshka, dolls in a way. We had in the beginning of the Clinton administration basically declared principles with respect to peacekeeping, which were tantamount to our never getting involved in peacekeeping for the UN after Somalia.

*Q: Later Clinton did offer apologies.*

PICKERING: He did very much.

*Q: Were you there at that time?*

PICKERING: Yes I was because it was his famous trip to Africa, I was under secretary.

*Q: How did that go? What was your impression?*

PICKERING: Well my impression was that his trips to Africa went very well and his apology was well received.

*Q: Susan Rice now has replaced you after some other people at the UN. But she was young. I've talked to people who give her the usual she is pretty young and opinioned as an assistant secretary, she was what in her 30s at the time?*

PICKERING: I don't know, she could have been.

*Q: So she was not the easiest person to work with at the time. How did you find her?*

PICKERING: I got along with her generally fine. We had disagreements over Sudan, we never got into a big huge fight, but I believed very much that we should not have abandoned our post in Sudan and we should return people to the post as soon as we could. We were in effect, manning the post out of Nairobi and over a period of time we were able to persuade Washington that we should put people back on a rotating basis. I hoped to have gotten to the place so that there was no time that we didn't have at least one person in Khartoum.

*Q: Well then moving on down what about at one point we were known as the frontline states of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, those kinds of...*

PICKERING: I think that was all fairly tame. Of course, while I was there the embassy was destroyed both in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

*Q: Oh, yes, yes, yes.*

PICKERING: That was a huge problem obviously. I got called at home early in the morning and went in right away. Madeleine Albright was away and I think Strobe was away too. We did all that we could to back up what people were on the ground, which was to try and dig out from under a particularly horrible mess, particularly in Nairobi. There were some bitter feelings in Nairobi, there still are, I think, that the recommendations of the ambassador on security were not heard...

*Q: I've interviewed Pru Bushnell and she goes into it in considerable detail and there is bitterness there.*

PICKERING: Yes and there is no question about it at all. I was not aware of Pru's concerns. I should have been. The real difficulty was that with all of these issues going on around the world, we had concerns in many places. How much could we do in any individual place was a question of okay how much was the intelligence analysis verified and how much were they going to tell us we had to do to pull up our socks from the security side of the Department. What we had were indications that turned out to be remarkably prescient. The real difficulty was we couldn't separate them from all of the noise.

*Q: Yeah. How did you feel in your position? I may have asked you this before about the Central Intelligence Agency and its information coming to you. Was this sort of a policy driver or was it just one of...*

PICKERING: I think it did three things. I had a briefer in the morning, I had the president's daily brief, which was as much as one could say -- the summa of what our intelligence assessments were. I'm sure there were other briefs that went into the president alone that were not part of the daily brief. I had that part of the daily take. We had a very good take from State, INR, and Madeleine Albright and I would often compare notes very early in the morning either on the phone or afterward in her office -- as she or I read them. We were briefed separately.

I had a briefer come in very early to talk to me and then I had an opportunity to ask questions and do a follow up. So it was useful in calling attention to issues and questions that were percolating along. Nominally, they were not things that we'd not heard about in our own channels at State, but sometimes there were new and different impressions that helped us to conclude about what needed to be done. Sometimes it would spark off a particularly targeted effort. Often it would result in questions and I would frequently ask the briefer questions and say here are some sets of problems and issues that you can be very helpful on. Some of that led to an effort on the part of the intelligence committee to support more rigorously our diplomat efforts, which was of great benefit. Up until that time, almost 80 percent of our intelligence information take was to support the military for all the traditionally obvious reasons.

But we were involved in a lot of very interesting negotiations and the intelligence community got very interested in supporting us on those. We worked out a kind of swat team operation so that if we had an important negotiation going on, they would put a swat team in the building from all across the intelligence community and actually support our negotiators wherever they were around the world in terms of up-to-date information and direct support. That was helpful.

Then occasionally these kinds of things would raise questions that would be taken up either at State or the White House, usually Sandy or Jim Steinberg chaired I, but we occasionally had small group meetings over at the White House in either Sandy's office or in the situation room to deal with particular problems many of which came up out of the intelligence take.

*Q: One of the things it sounds great when one is looking at a chart saying well the president gets a special briefing and all. In many ways, I'm not trying to be facetious but he's probably the last person to be able to deal with this. I mean the president has got to worry about the latest poll number and how pig farmers in Montana I mean there are a whole range of things and to be given this thing there is trouble brewing in Gabon. It's all nice and it gives special you might say, fame to the CIA by being able to tell this thing but the president is not going to do much about this.*

PICKERING: Well it also helps to say that the president knows that his principal subordinates are getting the same briefing and presumably they are.

*Q: But are they?*

PICKERING: Well they do, certainly the Cabinet secretaries dealing with national security issues get the same briefing. To some extent it gives the president an opportunity because he usually has it with the national security advisor to say I want to be sure that is being looked into and not left without dealing with it.

*Q: Did you ever run across any problems while you were the undersecretary of the president saying won't somebody rid me of this troublesome priest or the equivalent.*

PICKERING: No.

*Q: This was a problem of Nixon and it was a problem that often happens.*

PICKERING: No, I've attended a number of meetings to which the president came because president Clinton was very much of hands on and an intellectual in those things. He asked a number of questions. He would reach some conclusions, at least, in our presence about where things were and what needs to be done. Most interestingly, on occasions where he was facing a crucial decision, he went around the room not just with the principals but he went around to the back rows. So each of us who was there, who had some expertise in the matter, had an opportunity to say this is what we think you should do Mr. President.

*Q: Well did you find that again one of the things that happen is a bureaucratic thing? That the more important an issue becomes the more likely the experts are brushed aside.*

PICKERING: This is true and it was true of some of the highly sensitive information on the terrorist threat was not widely shared. There was no question at all that I think there were differences between INR and where we came out on the Ashifa chemical plant.

*Q: This is in Sudan.*

PICKERING: In Sudan when we actually fired Tomahawk missiles at a target. It was an interesting case because I sat and heard the case made in the small group and particularly strongly made. There was a very strong case being made by others in that group who I won't identify to hit other targets in Sudan. I think after we'd heard the case on Ashifa and the other targets certainly my recommendation when I was asked for it was that was Ashifa was the only palpable target there. It looked very strong because we claimed to have had chemical analysis from independent laboratories that identified a chemical weapons precursor that didn't occur naturally in the soil around Ashifa. While it was allegedly collected by one source we had several samples and we had several labs look at it not within the government. That precursor didn't appear in nature, in other places. I think we still now today have serious questions about whether Ashifa was that kind of target, but certainly the information we had looked very conclusive particularly compared to the kind of information people were purveying on other targets they wanted to hit. So part of this was a decision made in terms of which of the targets had any value as opposed do all the targets have any value. We did not have contrary information on the targets.

*Q: The pressure was we've got to do something.*

PICKERING: There was no question at all, although we didn't have to hit Sudan at all.

*Q: Well moving down what was happening in South Africa when you were there?*

PICKERING: Hard to recall.

*Q: Was Mandela...*

PICKERING: Mandela was there; there is no question he had come back. I don't know whether Mbeki had taken over yet or not. He had, because Mbeki I remember called me when I was in Lagos after Chief Abiola died and asked for my take on what had gone on which I provided to him over the phone. But I don't think there was a lot.

*Q: This was almost euphoria wasn't it?*

PICKERING: I mean it was coming out of Mandela period and South Africa was changing rapidly and things were going pretty well.

*Q: Well then let's switch over to the...*

PICKERING: I better stop.

*Q: Okay, fine. We'll stop at this point and we'll pick this up the next time and we will be returning to...*

PICKERING: Where do you want to go next?

*Q: Absolutely and then we will go to Latin America.*

PICKERING: Have we done Latin America?

*Q: Yeah we haven't done Latin America and then I would like to do the post-retirement period because you've been involved in all sorts of things.*

PICKERING: Okay.

*Q: All right, today is the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2009 with Tom Pickering. Tom we are ready to go to the Western Hemisphere.*

PICKERING: Okay.

*Q: Who was your assistant secretary for Western Hemispheric Affairs in those days?*

PICKERING: Peter Romero.

*Q: How did you find the bureau as such? I mean this was one you had to deal with when you were in El Salvador but how did you find it this time?*

PICKERING: I found it pretty good. We had a number of things that we worked on at various times. Pete and I had worked together very briefly, I think, in the old days on El Salvador so I knew him. I think our primary focus in that period was on Colombia and we can talk about that. We did some work on Brazil, Mexico was always an outstanding set of issues but it seemed to be perking along okay. We had some interest in Chile, in Venezuela and Central America from time to time but nothing really consuming. I went to a couple OAS general assemblies to represent the U.S. One in Windsor, Ontario and I think one in some place in the hemisphere, I forget exactly where, to talk about our efforts to try to promote a firmer hemispheric commitment to democracy including though resolutions in the OAS council I believe. In any event...

*Q: You didn't mention one country that probably never came to your attention it's called Cuba.*

PICKERING: Cuba did but not in a kind of heavily focused way. But certainly we spent some time on Cuban policy. There were those of us who were looking for change in Cuba. Mrs. Albright was also postured in that direction although after she had gone down to Miami and talked with the Cuban community, she came back recognizing that they were a powerful domestic political force and something that obviously could not be treated with lightly. The Cuban community in Miami in the late '90s was not ready for change.

*Q: Well then let's take a look at...*

PICKERING: Or not ready for significant change, we'll put it that way.

*Q: Sort of personally what did you feel? I think when you talk to our colleagues and myself included it is the feeling of those of us who don't know much about the situation. The embargo and the boycott and the whole thing has probably kept Castro in power more than if we hadn't. How did you feel about that?*

PICKERING: Well I thought that the embargo wasn't achieving any useful U.S. objective with the exception obviously of satisfying our friends in the Cuban-American community that we were putting pressure on Castro and on Cuba. As a result, I thought then, as I think now, that it would be terribly important to do a couple of things. One, even more importantly now, try to find ways to establish links and contacts with the Cuban people at large and certainly some of the leaders who will be around to affect change when Castro and now maybe Raul go. Secondly, to try to open up the country rather than to keep it closed, recognizing that change in Eastern Europe came when things opened up rather than things were kept closed and hermetically sealed or walled off. In large measure as is true with many sanctions, our economic embargo hurt people in Cuba a great deal more than they hurt the leadership in Cuba. I used to say that in connection with Saddam Hussein that he would have the last chicken sandwich in Iraq without doubts so there was no question at all of how things impacted. I believed more contact with Cubans through tourism and other visits would help open things up a little. In fact the embargo perhaps served Castro's interests more than it served ours by allowing him to preach that the Yanquis were going to invade. So I think those questions open it up.

I certainly then and now am in favor of opening up to tourism, opening it up to interchange -- sponsoring programs of student study in the United States and even vice versa as a way of

showing the Cubans that we cared about them as people and we were not seeking to punish the people of Cuba for a regime that they had inherited. We should take into account that some Cubans we had to respect were in favor of the regime and the regime had done some things that had made changes in Cuba despite the fact that it had done some very despicable things as well. Treatment of black Cubans had improved. Over a long period of time, change would come through integration in the international community rather than the alternative of total isolation from the international community. That was interestingly enough, of course, the policy we pursued with the Russians particularly after the fall of Communism.

*Q: Was the message you were getting obviously from Madeleine Albright just within the Washington community...*

Q: The Washington community was tortured by this. I think the Democrats traditionally have been in favor of a more open relationship, but they also understand that the Cuban community has enormously powerful influence in a critical state, in Florida, and can make a real difference. So I think there was also a significant amount of pressure to be cautious and careful about not creating within the United States a domestic political problem that would be an offshoot of, but directly related to major changes in our policy with Cuba. I think we tried small changes in an effort to ease it on some things like food and medicine but that never really took us far down the road.

*Q: In a way some of the proof of the policy is in the pudding. One could make the point that if it hadn't been for the Cuban-American influence in Florida we wouldn't have had George Bush, we wouldn't have had the war against Iraq and we probably wouldn't have been in Afghanistan.*

PICKERING: I think that is a little bit of a stretch.

*Q: But one can connect those dots without...they are there.*

PICKERING: I don't believe in single cause theories.

*Q: I don't either but at the same time having an ideological motivating president I think had consequences don't you, which came.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: But anyway, well then let's talk about Mexico. We had just passed the North American free trade...*

PICKERING: Well that happened in the first part of the administration so...

*Q: Anyway it was getting the whole...*

PICKERING: ...it was three or four years and we were engaged with it already.

*Q: Was this working?*

PICKERING: Yes, it was moving along fairly well and I think...

*Q: Anyway was it creating problems because of the devilish details or not in the State Department?*

PICKERING: Not in the State Department. The bulk of the fight had gone and people were now sitting back to see it work and there were some initial positive reaction. It was remarkable about that time somebody brought to my attention that for the first year or two, the state that achieved greatest gains in international trade as a result of NAFTA was North Carolina where, of course, Jessie Helms had opposed it. It was quite significant so there were some quite significant changes. It was not a big front and center issue.

*Q: Were there any other problems with Mexico? It's always been the sort of the consular side of things where Mexican's are arrested...*

PICKERING: Well there were a host of problems with Mexico. The big issues are the ones that continue this day, certainly immigration. Illegal immigration from Mexico was a big problem, trade with Mexico. I forget but I think we had the Mexican financial crisis about this time where Treasury did a very in-depth and careful job helping them bail themselves out in the process. We had U.S.-Mexican ministerial meetings that took place. But we were by the time of the second Bush administration pretty much as far down the road with Mexico as we were going to get, particularly with the Congress dominated by the other party at that point. There was very little Clinton could do to move the ball ahead with the Mexicans. That part of the set of the issues was more kind of running fast to stay even or running to stay even and kind of waiting to see what else would develop and breathing a sigh of relief that no really major crisis had intruded except that the Mexican financial problems. And at the same time, hoping that over a period of time we would be able to make small but significant progress in various kinds of activities in dealing with the border and cross-border problems.

As I remember, we may have had a problem or two with drug enforcement and particularly Americans in Mexico. That was never easy, it was always shadowy and always very difficult but none of that had really come to my level in a serious way.

We conducted a study at that time and moved Canada out of the European bureau and into the Western Hemisphere bureau.

*Q: I would think that the Canadians would be a bit miffed because it would seem to be taking them down a notch.*

PICKERING: They were not and I think we carefully talked to the Canadians about it but we said that we thought the geography was the principal determinant of our organizational arrangements. It didn't mean in any way that they were being downgraded and, in fact, as the European bureau had done we did even more. Significantly in Western Hemisphere affairs the name of the bureau was changed from the American Republics to Western Hemisphere affairs. We would have a deputy assistant secretary almost full time working on Canada as the European



Bureau did. So that made a little bit of difference but I don't think that they complained and I think they saw the unusual nature of the European arrangement. Of course, the Canadians by then had pulled their forces out of Europe, were not so Euro centric as they had been. They became more world centric and I think saw the nature of the relationship in terms that they were increasing their efforts in the hemisphere and didn't seem to be unhappy with the fact that this bureau would then cover from the North Pole to the South Pole, the whole hemisphere.

*Q: Well then let's talk about Colombia and essentially drugs. I mean this had to have been a major concern to all of us, wasn't it?*

PICKERING: Well this was a big problem and took a lot of my time eventually. I think probably sometime in 1997, I don't really recall, Jim Dobbins who was then covering Western Hemisphere for Sandy Berger over at the NSC, called me and said Tom, would I consider taking the lead in dealing with Colombia which was not getting any better. I said, "Jim I don't think that I really have the time or the opportunity at this stage to take that on." I was doing a lot of other things, it was a pretty demanding job and I didn't see how I could pick up on it. So that died away for a while, maybe another year or maybe even longer. I think Jim was no longer over there, but one day Sandy Berger called me probably in late '98 maybe and said Colombia is really getting worse and we have no real focus on it. He would want me to lead an executive committee of the National Security Council including all the departments and agencies around the government to deal with Colombia. I said, "Sandy, if you ask and Madeleine agrees, of course I will do that. It's important and we obviously are not seeing things get better." So we agreed and certainly Pete Romero and Randy Beers who was in the drugs and thugs bureau, narcotics and law enforcement, had been at least privy to the thinking that had went into this. So I gathered them right away and they were enormously helpful; they had a lot of good ideas.

Out of them came the beginning of the thinking about in the executive committee. We should focus on creating some kind of a planned effort to deal with Colombia that would be something that would hook the Colombians in as much as us. It would be devoted to making a major effort across the board in Colombia and with the myriad of issues that afflicted Colombia at the time. And, that given the sensitivities in the Congress on counter insurgencies as a result of Somalia and indeed Vietnam and indeed probably El Salvador, we should look at this as primarily a counter drug focused effort. But in so far as the military were involved, it would be the anti-drug fighting rather than fighting with the left-wing guerrilla organizations (who were deeply engaged in and profited from the drug trade). We should specifically help the Colombian military to improve their capacity to do drug prevention, drug eradication and the protection of forces engaged in drug eradication work. We should spend a lot of time with the Colombian police, we should spend a lot of time with the judiciary with the social system, with the prosecutorial system, all the things that were broken in Colombia, which in one way or another tended to add to the national breakdown.

Part of that was heavily motivated by the fact that Andres Pastrana had just been elected president in Bogotá over on the conservative side of the house. He seemed to be dedicated to dealing with Colombia and its future and open to this kind of effort. Prior to Pastrana, the Colombian government, which didn't seem to be very interested or malleable so we thought there was now a new an opportunity to make some progress with Colombia.

Well a couple of things happened. We went to Colombia and set things out for Pastrana and his key cabinet colleagues. We worked very closely with the Colombian ambassador here, Luis Alberto Moreno, who's now head of the inter-American development bank. He was enormous helpful and close to the president and a great facilitator of getting things done as well as having lots of ideas on his own. The US interagency group met. It was an interesting group because most of the people in the group had been dealing with Colombia on an inter-agency basis for a long period of time, but were frustrated by the notion that no real progress could be made and were frustrated by the notion that they and their agencies, we had AID and Justice and some of the domestic agencies as well as the Defense Department, the JCS, were all frustrated by the fact that they had useful programs, but they couldn't get a high enough priority to get them funded and get them engaged. So very quickly, with the help of Pete Romero and his people and Randy Beers and his people, we put together the outline of the strategy. The strategy was essentially built around what later became known as Plan Colombia.

Plan Colombia was envisaged to be something that we would go to Colombia and talk to the leadership about. It was central to get them, in fact, to take ownership of the preparation of a plan. We would make major contributions. Out of the effort would come a joint U.S.-Colombian effort with significant inputs by the Colombians as well as by the United States to pick up all the various pieces of how Colombia was, in fact, going to rescue itself from becoming a failed, narco state. It was then well on the way to becoming such. There were major thrusts in many different directions involved in the plan. It included a serious military effort, better intelligence collection and analysis and major actions to develop the social structure and the judiciary and court system. It had to tackle the outstanding problems with which Colombia had over a long period of time had grappled.

One key was that Colombia was doing most of these things already. The value of putting them together in a single effort and then funding it was the value of synergy.

We then went down to Colombia. I'd never met President Pastrana, but we had an early meeting with Pastrana and his key advisors and we set this out for them. Curt Kamman was our ambassador and obviously Kurt had prepared the way. They were very receptive to this approach and we spent a lot a time with them, maybe a whole day and it was arranged that they would appoint leaders in their own country to produce the plan and that we would then work with them to put this plan together with our contribution being in areas where they had not yet put in place actions and proposals. It took some time and there were a lot of hiccups along the way.

*Q: How did you find the drug enforcement agency? Because the relations with our embassies have not always been great because the drug enforcement agencies are enforcement agencies and I mean they are used to going in and doing things and in other countries you just can't.*

PICKERING: In Colombia it was mixed. In Colombia there was a very strong effort made over the years made by the Colombian police to differentiate themselves from the armed forces, which had a rather bad reputation for misbehavior. The Colombian police were the front of the spear in dealing with drugs. They cooperated fairly closely with the DEA, so we didn't seem to have a lot of friction there. The Colombian police leader at that time became the darling of a

number of members in the Congress. He was popular and the idea of dealing with the Colombian police became quite popular. That helped. The DEA, of course, played a major role in working with us on such questions as to what would be the strategy in respect to eradication. So did the White House drug control office under General Barry McCaffrey

We had a major effort going on in Colombia with the Colombians to use aerial spraying to attack major drug plantations when we found them. That continued to work, but we also had to go increasingly to ground-based interdiction and ground-based destruction of crops because the Colombian drug growers quickly learned that they could spread the crops around further into the jungle and avoid a mass annihilation of their cocaine by aerial spraying. There were, of course, campaigns mounted against aerial spraying as being bad for the environment and health although generally speaking we had no really proven serious cases of difficulty in that regard. We looked at it carefully because it was a major point of what we were doing. I felt the cooperation inside the USG and with Colombia was very good.

Even more importantly was the fact that Barry McCaffrey was over at the White House and Barry had become the drug czar in the Clinton administration. Barry was very much engaged. There were things that Barry didn't like that we were headed toward doing. He either voiced his concerns and we shifted the policies or we got them done in a different way with Barry's support. He was a full team player and very much part of the effort. His team and his people were a major part of the executive committee although the guiding coalition within the executive was really in State with Pete Romero and Randy Beers the INL bureau. They sat with me from time to time and we looked at next steps and planned strategy and worked things ahead.

*Q: Well just recently Hilary Clinton as secretary of State went to Mexico and when she said something, which we all have known, but apparently it hadn't been articulated at the highest level, as perhaps as much as it should be that the Mexican's are having a hell of a problem with drug lords now. But we the Americans one was supplying the guns illegally and buying the drugs illegally but we weren't acknowledging our liability in this.*

PICKERING: No, no that was a problem with Colombia, they felt too that we had never done enough to deal with domestic drug demand in the US. Barry was conscious of this and since it was his policy shop that undertook to deal with that, in the end of the Clinton administration we put a great deal more effort into dealing with domestic demand. We understood that it was a necessary commitment to a full Colombian cooperation on the plan. As it was, the Colombians put about two-thirds of the funding in play in Colombia; we put about a third in. We provided major elements; the biggest elements of our costs were on the military side because it was thought immediately they needed helicopters to have the kind of mobility for vetted, trained up military units to deal with the drug eradication problem.

*Q: How did we view the guerrilla movement in Colombia at that time?*

PICKERING: Well we felt that the guerrilla movement as we felt the paramilitary movements, which were the right-wing guerrilla movements, were both benefiting enormously from the drug trade. They had moved in to control it and siphoned off money from it and actually supported it. So it was a kind of moneymaking engine for them to keep going. They had gained in strength as

a result of these kinds of efforts. In fact, the left wing organization had actually gotten a demilitarized zone to themselves in the center of Colombia where the army said it wouldn't go; at least the largest of them achieved this -- the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). There were several left-wing guerrilla organizations. We worked quietly with Pastrana outside of Plan Colombia, but on a very personal diplomatic basis, to support him in dealing with the negotiations that he wanted to undertake with the guerrillas. He wanted to see if he could use the negotiating process to bring them around both on things like prisoner releases and also to see if he could move toward a settlement. It was a long and very difficult proposition. The Spanish played a role. Former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez was very helpful with some of the contacts. Castro played a role with the ELN (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional), which was a left-wing guerrilla organization, which had strong relationships in Cuba. The Cubans apparently played it fairly straight as far as we and Pastrana saw in terms of bringing things together. So did the Roman Catholic church; it was helpful in making contacts with the ELN.

At that point we were pushing Pastrana very hard to engage in the negotiating process; it was very hard to get real engagement on the other side. He appointed a number of negotiators and they had meetings. The head of the FARC was a very obdurate man who has since died, a man who had been in the bush a long period of time, was if anything was totally out of touch with world realities and what was happening. Known as Tijofijo, Sure Shot, he showed little interest in any compromise. As a result, things didn't move either very far or very well, but this was a very important track in our political strategy even though we didn't make this track a piece of Plan Colombia because of the sensitivity of the issue and the problems involved. We also pushed Pastrana very hard to deal with the right-wing paramilitaries. He found that even more difficult with regard to his political position at home which didn't allow him the kind of latitude that his successor Uribe has had in trying to marginalize and rein in the right wing paramilitaries. But the right-wing paramilitaries were also causing very significant problems in the ill treatment of local campesino farmers and the like. We were very concerned by linkages between the right wing paramilitaries and the military. The links became apparent between them and the military intelligence establishment and even the police. After the fact, it is very apparent that the links existed and we certainly suspected this if not had good information.

It was interesting that in the first meeting of our executive committee when we sat down we started off with an intelligence briefing. The intelligence briefing was almost irrelevant to what it was we were going to talk about. I forget what it was but it was not very germane to the issues at hand and not very appropriate to what we were considering. We kept including the intelligence people in the discussion so that they would have an idea of where we were going. At each further meeting they had a much better idea of how to support us in what we were engaged in. It was an interesting development.

*Q: It is one of the problems. Intelligence like any other organizations it tends to focus on things it is sort of intrigued by or it feels it is important.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Sometimes it's really not in line...*

PICKERING: It loses a lot of policy relevance, absolutely.

*Q: Yeah, but by doing this inclusion was this something you sort of sit around in the back room and say don't trash them.*

PICKERING: I think when they first came we listened to what they had to say but they had to listen to the rest of our conversation. They had an obvious sense of the fact that they had not been focusing in on a lot of other things that we were most interested in and that could be more useful. So they adapted quite quickly. Having the intelligence people involved in policy process discussions was very important to give them a sense of what was relevant.

*Q: It really is. What about you mentioned the church, what about the Catholic Church? First in dealing with the mega problems like drugs and rebel movements.*

PICKERING: Well it depended obviously on with whom you were speaking because we all know the hierarchy is not monolithic in a lot of these countries and certainly it wasn't in Colombia. So there were Bishops who were hard right and known to be hard right and very conservative and some who were off closer to the left. Of course, in some areas, I don't think it was necessarily true in Colombia, but the liberation theology movement in the '80s had a great deal of close connections with the left and insurgents, certainly in my time with the El Salvador with guerrilla movement there.

*Q: Was the Pope much concerned on this?*

PICKERING: I can't tell you, I never talked to him. No, I think that over time the local hierarchies and the local leaders and Bishops played a much more important role than the Vatican did. I'm sure they kept the Vatican informed and had support for what they were doing but it was clear that they were certainly in favor of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Church had certainly taking an appropriate and I think moral stand on these kinds of issues even if, in fact, some of them found themselves intellectually and maybe philosophically closer either to the right or the left of the process.

*Q: How did you view Colombia? Were there these major social divisions of the super rich and the super poor?*

PICKERING: Well they were certainly true and it was certainly a country that had a growing, I think, middle class. It made serious progress in education and had a good university system. Certainly in comparison with El Salvador you had more people who were in a sense consequential players as a result of their background experience in education. You had a greater reservoir of stronger people to draw upon and you had a much larger country and a much more wealthy country in oil and coal and minerals and things of this sort. A good share of it was moving because of extreme poverty -- the rural people toward cocaine production and heroin production where they got significant amounts of income. The government had trouble replacing

that, it was nevertheless a country that was clearly playing in the first rank in Latin America in the long term and it deserved to be there.

*Q: How about Venezuela? Venezuela is a pain in the ass right now for us with Chavez but how...?*

PICKERING: Well it was beginning to be. Chavez came into power about this time and I went several times, more times than I like, to Venezuela in part to talk to him about Colombia and in part to talk to him about cooperation with Colombia. A certain number of flights were coming out of Colombia carrying drugs. A certain amount of them detoured over Venezuela in order to try to escape controls along the Colombian coast and further into the Caribbean. They tried to get out of the standard flight patterns to avoid being caught. These were light aircraft flying from fields in the jungles and remote areas of Colombia delivering drugs to the US. We kept asking the Venezuelan military if, in fact, they would bring these airplanes down or close off the route and they were very chary about it. There was no question at all that Hugo Chavez and his leadership, the foreign minister in particular were very much inclined to be supportive of the left and the FARC. In the Colombian government there was no question at all that there continued to be traditional tensions between Venezuela and Colombia which were aggravated by the situation. So while I went there and talked and spent some time with Chavez, it was not my view that we were likely to get anywhere with Venezuela certainly as long as Chavez was around. The best we could do was to keep the pressure on and try to keep things under control. But it was a very much a kind reversion to cold war type left-right dueling -- those kinds of arguments over the situation. There were lots of Venezuelan complaints either about being mistreated by the United States or not being treated well enough by the United States depending upon the issue.

Chavez was interesting to speak with. He reminded me of some of the military from El Salvador. A parachutist and proud of it. He reasoned in a political way and acted like the populist image he sought to create for himself. I listened a lot, but also pushed back on allegations about issues where he had complaints about the US. John Maisto was our Ambassador and did a fine job. He knew Chavez quite well by then and briefed me on Chavez' approach and issues he was likely to raise.

*Q: Did we view Chavez as being somebody we essentially ignore or try not to do much about him because if we did something about him it would probably gain him popular support?*

PICKERING: All of those possibilities were there. One of the most striking things was the complete disruption through what was basically almost self-destruction of the two opposing parties that had been present in the political structure. With Chavez success they had disappeared -- as a result of Chavez. Chavez was enormously helped by the fact that he had no well-organized serious opposition. Both of the traditional parties tended to be a combination of the rich and wealthy on the one hand and maybe labor union activities over on the left and the other. Some had middle class penetration but seemingly not a lot, and less in the rural parts of the country. I can remember several meetings at the embassy residence when we had large dinner parties of the people opposed to Chavez. It wasn't hard to find the real problem, there was no cohesion, no interest in working together or even in building a party. Each of the individuals who came saw themselves as the new possible leader, but had neither party nor support from friends

or others. There was no willingness to join together in any serious way to oppose the Chavez and what he was doing.

*Q: Did you feel that Chavez...what was he going to do to his country? How did you feel during that time?*

PICKERING: Well he came across as a hard driving Latin American paratroop major with a lot of things on his mind, a long list of wrongs in his head, a lot of bombastic speech and a lot of political spiel. But there was no question at all that he was striving to create for himself a very strong base in what was basically a kind of semi-romantic, left wing populism based on Latin American independence and the role of Bolivarian tradition -- all of those things. He was trying to play chords on his violin that appealed to big pieces of his domestic audience and at the same time trying to find ways to get directly to the Campesino public as much as he possibly could. His purpose was continually to build up his own strength in his own country.

*Q: Were we feeling again during the time you were undersecretary, that his handing out largesse of oil revenues to other countries was this a problem for us?*

PICKERING: Well he was trying to influence other people, particularly in Central America and, of course, it created a problem where we had differences with him. Both we and then later the Bush administration attempted to pursue policies that didn't magnify Venezuela or his success as a way of trying to keep him under control. In addition to that, we spent a fair amount of time with Brazil and other leaders in the hemisphere on seeing, in fact, if they couldn't find a way to fence him in or at least keep him from being totally out of control. The point being he was as much their problem as ours if not more, but they preferred to see him as our problem and find ways to get along with him

*Q: Well then sort of moving around to...well how about Central America? Was this pretty quiet?*

PICKERING: It was very quiet at the time. I think there was not an awful lot going on. Later on it became clear that in Salvador at least we had begun sending back youth gang members -- something called the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). They got into trouble in the US and we deported them. Salvador was just recovering from its civil war. The UN were retraining the police. To put the burden of youth gangs on the back of the country with no real preparation or assistance meant that half way through the recovery period the ill patient was exposed to another rather deadly virus. Later they connected up with the Mexican and other drug cartels and as a result the Salvadoran government has another problem with drug trafficking which it is not well equipped to deal with.

*Q: Well then moving down to sort of the Andes, Ecuador and Peru. How involved were they with the drug trade at that time?*

PICKERING: Well Peru was seriously involved and it later moved out and then moved back in to the drug business. Ecuador never got seriously involved. There was the outstanding boundary dispute between Peru and Ecuador, which over the time I was there was brought to resolution finally by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States who were the guarantor powers.

*Q: This goes back to 1940 or so.*

PICKERING: Absolutely.

*Q: I have an accountant, I can't remember his name right now who was desk officer and I think it was your job the undersecretary called up and said, "We can't have a war there, do something about it." So essentially he got that group together.*

PICKERING: Yes, they put together a treaty for an arbitrational settlement and over a period of time and with negotiations it took a little bit of time. I spent a little of my time talking to both the Ecuadorian and the Peruvian ambassadors at critical times about how important it was to go along with the settlement. Of course, each of them had serious complaints that they weren't being treated fairly or well by the United States or by the outcome. But they both agreed to the outcome and so far it has stuck, knock on wood.

*Q: Well they had a war in which I think the Peruvians got a bloody nose. In the long run I think Ecuador would have probably suffered more but I think a little air war or something.*

PICKERING: Well they did and I think they had some dust ups while we were working on it and it was then hard to get people to pull back to where they should have pulled back. There were still arguments; but I think over a period of time that's gotten shaken down. Luigi Einaudi was at the OAS and deserves great credit for helping to pull that settlement through.

*Q: Did Bolivia cause any problems by any chance?*

PICKERING: Not that came on my screen or that I can immediately think about.

*Q: Yeah. Then Brazil is because of that huge country there.*

PICKERING: Right.

*Q: How did we treat our relationship with Brazil because I would think this would be a difficult one? When the RSO gets big it doesn't seem to be very high on our list of priorities.*

PICKERING: There was no question at all that Brazil, in part because Chile was recovering from the Pinochet period and Argentina was descending into a further morass of constant economic difficulties and uncertainties, was playing a larger and more important role. Brazil under Cardoso seemed to be getting its act together in a serious way. We moved from a situation where we were reluctant to single out Brazil for a special relationship, to the point where one of the things I tried to set up was a dialogue with the Brazilians at my level They were very happy to do so and we had frequent conversations with the Brazilian Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry. We had an issue over Brazil's wanting to establish a space launch site at the equator. I forget how we eventually resolved that. It was a kind of scratchy question. There were always occasional trade questions with Brazil.



*Q: There had been a period but I think this was earlier where we were concerned that of all stupidity Brazil and Argentina seemed to be moving up toward the nuclear race.*

PICKERING: Yeah, well that was solved earlier by creating a treaty in which both of them came back from the brink and agreed to their own non-proliferation inspection system. Of course, the Brazilians are now back on the trail toward doing more with nuclear than I think we ought to be comfortable with. Of course, we have this closer relationship with them so it's hard to treat them rigidly in this area.

*Q: Yeah. Well then Argentina is a country that has everything but it doesn't work.*

PICKERING: Yes. When I went to Argentina or at least when I was there, I'm not sure whether it was while I was at the Department or at the UN, it's hard for me to sort that out. I think it was possibly while I was under secretary met with the Argentineans, I don't think we had any serious problems with them. They had a very adept, I'm trying to remember his name, a very adept foreign minister who had been extremely helpful to us in a number of the inner hemispheric forums from time to time. He tended to see things often the way we saw them so that was extremely helpful, He had been around for a long time. But Argentina itself was kind of shaky from time to time on trade and economic issues.

*Q: Back to Brazil in our Foreign Service the Brazilian Foreign Service has quite a solid reputation.*

PICKERING: Yes it does, very strong.

*Q: How did this translate though as far as was it a useful internationally or just a good foreign service of a country that doesn't really affect us too much?*

PICKERING: Well we saw it as a good foreign service in the service of Brazil. We valued contacts with Brazilian colleagues and they had good insights into what was going on in lots of places. They were in many cases professionally very easy to work with. As I remember the foreign minister at the time was actually first class, he was a lawyer and had come out of political life but was very astute and very capable. A number of Brazilian foreign ministers I have known fell into the same pattern.

*Q: Did Latin America weigh particularly heavy on you or...*

PICKERING: No, I would say with the exception of Colombia where I did get involved and I went many times to Colombia and we pursued this plan and developed it and took it to the OMB and then took it to the Hill there were not a lot of other questions.

*Q: Was Bill Clinton at all engaged with Latin America?*

PICKERING: Yes, to a serious extent. He knew and understood the importance of Mexico and certainly of Canada and Brazil. He must have made some trips to the region; those are not things I normally went on. He understood the Colombia problem very well and understood that it was

important to get on top of it and made a major effort to support the work that we did in the Executive Committee I mentioned earlier.

*Q: Now when we are talking Western Hemisphere I can see it is Latin America but let me say Western Hemisphere. With Canada in it did you find the relationship with the Canadians for one thing it seems like they have almost an aggressive in your face policy toward Cuba. It doesn't go anywhere but it's just a way of showing they are different than we are or something. How did you find the Canadians?*

PICKERING: The Canadians had several levels of concern. Generally speaking on many issues where we had very little to divide us. They were easy to work with, they had good ideas and they were highly professional. They are a small service so in some ways they could get things done more rapidly than we could. Being a small service they were less 'barnacled' by bureaucracy and able to think more and particularly out of the box. They had some very adept and well-trained people. They clearly had selected very well. Occasionally you would find folks who were concerned because A) sometimes they weren't from time to time treated the way they expected to be by the United States or B) they thought the United States was engaged in making huge mistakes some of which, not all of them, would work to their disadvantage. They were hooked to the wagon and there was no way they could get out of North America and we were very much the elephant trampling on the grass on that one for them. So they had to put up with us. But I think they worked hard to avoid creating what I would call a sense of personal animosity and what they wanted was to be treated as serious, thoughtful people who had perhaps a different and interesting perspective. We would listen and consult and undertake to try and deal with their questions and concerns.

I think that over on the political side, this got more or less intense depending upon who was running the Canadian government, how difficult the problems were at the time and that they did not want to be seen as a 51<sup>st</sup> state. They did not want to be seen as a kind of running dog of the Americans nor did they want to be seen as our implacable foes on any issue that came along. They wanted to be seen as independent, so they had to pick and choose their issues and opportunities. But generally speaking they were tougher with good reason on the economic issues that hurt them the most, than they were necessarily on the political differences where they could find ways to smooth things over.

I think as Canadian governments and our governments come and go, the perspectives of the leaders are sometimes a little bit different. What separates us are practical differences as opposed to philosophical or ideological ones. You could have a Canadian government to the right and an American government to the left and on most things they would find a significant amount of common agreement on the core of things rather than each being informed by its own domestic political position being quite different. I think the Canadians over the years had more trust and faith in the UN than we did. They were more constant about it, worked harder to make it a successful organization and made a long standing Canadian contribution to peacekeeping. The Canadians were always of a mixed mind in terms of their armed forces -- whether they should be more robust or less robust. I think it's quite a remarkable thing that Canada has gone into Afghanistan with us with so many people and lost so many in a fight that it would be hardly in

terms of American politics be one that Canada would necessarily see itself in the forefront. But real differences with us on Iraq, not on the first Iraq war but on the second Iraq war, were a major issue.

*Q: Did you find was it your job to keep an eye on overly articulate desk officers farther up the line a little bit but people involved with certain countries who get so concerned with the relations between their countries that maybe their annoying the country with which they are dealing with? In other words I mean were the guy who said cool it fellas or not?*

PICKERING: I think rarely. I think in the main, particularly in the WHA bureau, they have a pretty good sense of this. Most of their people because it's a bureau that has less incoming Foreign Service officers from other bureaus and perhaps because of its heavy concentration of Spanish speakers and its heavy focus on the one region, which is geographically more isolated than most, it tended to suffer from not having the leaven of people with experience from the outside. But it tended also to benefit from the fact that everybody knew each other. They knew very well the countries with which they worked. Most of them had served there. They did a very good job in linking past service with the future commitments and support of their people in terms of the areas they were working. I thought they had a pretty good sense of the right balance in our policies. I didn't think that we had a lot of overstretch in terms of misbehavior the way things were going. They had a good front office, a very solid one and that tended to come down well. It was a front office that was interested in generating ideas about how to resolve problem areas or deal with problem areas. They had a fairly strong sense of the need for a forward look; it wasn't merely that they were tending a garden out there, they were planting new flowers and attempting to harvest old ones.

*Q: Henry Kissinger got into a little entanglement with the Western Hemisphere people. He felt that it was too insulated and they didn't know enough about European affairs and all that. Of course, Henry Kissinger was stating his own prejudices he was the one who was supposed to have said, "Let the Americas dagger point at the heart of Antarctica."*

PICKERING: There were several things about that that I noticed about Henry. One was of course, his GLOP, his Global Outreach Program, apparently came out of a conversation he had with the Foreign Service officers, I think it was in Mexico City...

*Q: It was in Mexico City.*

PICKERING: He asked them about how wide the Suez Canal was and nobody knew; not that anybody would know today.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: But that was not one of the...

*Q: Trivia of the past.*

PICKERING: ...far enough so you can't throw an orange across. Anyway, he introduced the notion that people should be moved around the bureaus. I think it was generally good and, of course, my career followed that pattern for years.

*Q: Well yours is really unusual.*

PICKERING: Yes, and I always found it good and that was interesting. I think that the Latin American bureau probably suffers more and Africa less from that, in part because there is a lot of mobility in Africa; Africa has a lot of Chief of Mission posts and other bureaus tend to want to poach on those. The Africanists, of course, want to try and defend them; but there is some moving in and out of there.

What I found very interesting is -- I only had one assignment in Latin America. What I found interesting and I may have said this before was when I got to El Salvador after a long period of time both in the Middle East and Muslim countries, how interesting I found it that the Spanish culture that had really settled El Salvador had come within 30-40 years of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. It was interesting how many customs from the Arab world, presumably Arab Spain, persisted and do so to this day. These include, the place and treatment of women (not all bad nor all good but influenced in some ways by Islamic traditions), the role of men, the role of honor, culture and pride in people's behavior, polite forms of behavior -- all of these kinds of things. For me with a lot of experience in Muslim countries, they were not too different and were completely apparent. It is unusual that they have persisted to this day.

So I didn't find with all of my lack of experience in Latin America when I went to a place like El Salvador that it was so completely strange, so culturally unrelated. There were cultural ties and linkages and forms of behavior and forms of operating that were quite familiar.

*Q: Talking now we've sort of covered the ground. Let's talk about in State Department terms did you find yourself playing the role of the senior career person in the State Department for the most part? Was there a role for somebody of that nature?*

PICKERING: There was and some of it was official and some of it was semi-official and it was interesting to analyze. The official part was sort of fairly easy. I was on the D committee and so I spent time on that -- the D Committee is the Deputy Secretary's Committee to make recommendations for the appointment of ambassadors from the career service. The D Committee in those days had an interesting makeup -- it was certainly a balanced committee, the secretary's chief of staff, and the counselor of the department both of whom were outside the Foreign Service were on it. Stu Eizenstat may have been on it; he didn't come often but he was there. Of course the director general and I represented the service but it was not a committee that you would say was a slam-dunk for service people. There was a real effort to try to push diversity, which we all supported, and there was an effort, obviously, to seek to find the very best people. We generally worked from suggestions by the director general, but often made our own that came in from outside and we tended to try to work closely with the director general on evaluations of what were the strengths and the weaknesses of various people we were looking at. The DG represented as well the ideas of the regional Assistant Secretaries which we wanted to hear and took seriously.

But other issues, because the under secretary for management was not from the career service, she would come to consult with me fairly often on decisions that affected the service or affected at least some aspect of our lives. There were always efforts particularly by the DS people to get the under secretary for management to close posts for security reasons. I was congenitally opposed to that, but I couldn't ignore it -- after all we had the two bombings in East Africa and had lost people at posts before. In places like Dushanbe in Tajikistan we had differences. We couldn't seem to find an alternative premises that met any of the standards and we were then working with the Inman standards and where people tended to think because of its remoteness and some of the internal difficulties they had been in near civil war in the early '90s inside Tajikistan, we ought to close the post. They could not achieve the required set back working in the hotel where they were located. I wanted to keep it open in part because I felt it was a place on the border of Afghanistan and in the middle of Central Asia where we had to be present given our interests in that part of the world, even if a small presence. So we made a deal that we actually moved the post temporarily to Almaty in Kazakhstan, but I said to the ambassador that I didn't want to have the post operate without somebody there every day, even if it was one person. We could provide housing for one person not in an appropriate premises, but in a hotel. I said I thought it was significant that we do it. Of course, it became important to us when we had to go back into Afghanistan that we didn't have to reestablish an embassy again in Dushanbe, we were there.

Sudan, of course, we've talked about. I was deeply concerned that Sudan had been closed before I came on the job. It turned out on the basis of false information from a source to the CIA that seemingly showed us in danger and got us to move. It took a long struggle to get the post back. It was seen that we had removed the post for multiple reasons, but principally because of the serious threat, which was the most important one. Secondly, probably because we wanted to tell the Sudanese we didn't like the way they were operating, particularly in a number of areas. As you know, President Mubarak had almost been assassinated there. Osama bin Laden was living there and we had asked the Sudanese to get rid of him. We were certainly unhappy over the war going on in Southern Sudan between the mainly Christians and Animists in the south and the Arab Muslim north. So that all made for a problem, but on the other hand my sense was that when you have the biggest problems you have the biggest need to have people on the site who can give you a firsthand experience about what's going on. So those were kinds of questions that came up in the context of the kind of senior Foreign Service position in the hierarchy of the State Department.

*Q: Well you had a team of Madeleine Albright and...*

PICKERING: Strobe Talbott.

*Q: ...Strobe Talbott. They really didn't come from outside.*

PICKERING: Oh no, they had long experience...

*Q: They had been there for a long time. So I take it you didn't have to sort of translate the Foreign Service to them.*

PICKERING: No, to some extent I did. To some extent they couldn't understand why some Foreign Service officers had acted so independently, were not as they saw it properly disciplined in terms of the way in which they were behaving. I think there has been for many years a kind of tradition that people who come into the secretary's job tend to get a little bit poisoned by being outside. They somehow feel that the Foreign Service will operate against their interests, that the Foreign Service has its own foreign policy to pursue and it will not accept orders, that the Foreign Service will go and embarrass them or make life difficult for them or show them up or fail to serve them effectively. That is a very hard barrier to overcome. With some secretaries it's never overcome and I think with Jim Baker it wasn't. I think with Henry it was hard although Henry said at the end that he had come out of the whole encounter with a much different feeling. He came to feel that his best people were Foreign Service officers and he was best served by them. I think Madeleine was probably in the middle. She had some reservations. Maybe we should wind down.

*Q: Just two short questions.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: One is I've mentioned this before but in my interviews I've seen this apparent phenomena of the more an issue turns into a crisis, foreign policy, for one thing it attracts the activists who are often political activists and the people with most clout who tend to shove aside the experts I mean this is where the action is and it becomes very much a Washington centric group around sometimes a policy matter without somebody saying hey, wait a minute that's not going to work in a Muslim country or something of that nature. Did you find yourself getting involved in kind of leveling the mix of people who were dealing with the problem?*

PICKERING: No, I encouraged meetings in my office for bureaus to bring their expertise. I expected the bureaus when they came to a meeting that they would be reflecting their expertise, not always necessarily the case but the bulk of my assistant secretaries in the regional bureaus were Foreign Service or people with the kind of understanding like Stanley Roth and Rick Inderfurth with background experience that tended to rely very heavily on the Foreign Service. So I expected that I was getting professional judgments well informed by country expertise. Where I had some knowledge or some expertise and could ask questions, I usually did because I wanted to be sure, in fact, that they had taken into account the kind of considerations that I had in mind. Not that I was expert in everywhere and had all of the right questions to ask. But generally speaking when the material came up in written form, it was either pretty good or if it was strange or unusual, my staff who were very good, I had five special assistants, worked it out before I got it. I didn't very often have to deal with a bad paper. Occasionally, I would get something through that looked strange and then we would have a meeting or call people or ask questions or figure out what was wrong. So part of my job was to insure that it all passed the sniff test.

*Q: Overall what was your judgment on the effectiveness of Madeleine Albright?*

PICKERING: I thought Madeleine was more effective than she's given credit for. She had a very strong and determined personality and she had her own views. I didn't agree with them all, but

she always listened to mine. She was in very close touch with Sandy Berger; maybe she was more compliant with Sandy's approach than she should have been, although I think the two of them saw things mainly eye-to-eye. I think I had some differences with her over Russia where she brought a very strong sense that these people were not operating in our interest and never would, in other areas less so. After all she was born in Prague, proud of her ancestry and very aware that the Soviets had not treated her birth country very well. She was willing to take on difficult issues and certainly we worked hard for her and she was willing to listen to and work with the assistant secretaries. She came to trust them and came to reflect very carefully their thinking and ideas in the policy process.

Q: All right, well Tom we will stop at this point.

*Q: Okay, today is Appomattox Day, the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2009, with Tom Pickering. Tom, let's see let's talk about the Department of State as undersecretary. In the first place your time there and what you want to talk about, what other things you were involved in because by longevity and maybe even ability you've become sort of Mr. Foreign Service, you've been around for a long time. So you've been tapped and you still are being tapped for other things but let's talk about the undersecretary period.*

PICKERING: Let's leave all of the historical comments and encomiums aside for the moment. There are a couple of things that might be worth considering here. One was my appreciation of the job as I came into it and the things that I felt needed to be done. Then secondly to follow on from that, because it's a logical segue, is the interest that Madeleine Albright had in trying to bring about some reforms in the operation of the State Department. I volunteered in the role I took on with respect to that goal -- and how that faired and fitted in. Then, how that eventually got morphed or aligned into process ten years later that Condi Rice, Secretary Rice, undertook where I joined the committee on transformational diplomacy. That will take a little while but let me go ahead and do it and why don't you jump in as usual, with your questions as you see the process going ahead.

I came to the under secretary's job with a sense that this was the ideal job for a Foreign Service officer and I left equally reinforced in that. In that sense it is considered usually the highest-level job a Foreign Service officer can get aspire to. People like Walt Stoessel, John Negroponte, Bill Burns and Larry Eagleburger were all deputy secretary's and then Larry, Secretary of State so there isn't a total glass ceiling, but there is a kind of glass ceiling in which Foreign Service officers who have the luck and I suppose a reasonable amount of success can aspire to hit up against.

Secondly, there is a tendency to see that job as a combination of a number of things. One, the Departments' crisis manager and certainly I had that role in many crises and with many issues, obviously subject to the secretary's and deputy secretary's own interests. But in the main, I was either the crisis manager or supported the secretary or the deputy secretary if they wanted to do that. It all worked out quite well. In that context I worked closely with the interagency process in the Deputies Committee at the White House and with the special group to deal with terrorist threats.

*Q: I want to point out for somebody looking at this. There was a long article, called I think it was In the Eye of the Storm, about David Newsome in that job which I refer people to that too.*

PICKERING: That pretty much puts it into perspective. The second thing that I was concerned about when I came in was the preoccupation I had about excessive stove piping.

*Q: You might explain about stove piping.*

PICKERING: Stove piping is a word that is now achieved general currency, but it means in fact that information activities, policy recommendations and ideas are channeled through narrow conduits within the bureaucracy up the line to the secretary so that, in fact, outside reflections and other ideas are either eliminated or prohibited or because of the bureaucratic arrangement never lets other ideas from the outside see the light of day. I should begin by saying that anybody that looks at it for half a minute will understand that the State Department is a matrix Department' That means that on every policy issue there are always competing bureaucratic interests. These are essentially best represented in the 'matrixing', if I can call it that way, of the regional bureaus, the five or six bureaus that, in effect, divide up the world, have the money to run the embassies and are the major work horses and powerhouses of the State Department and the functional bureaus set up over the years to represent a series of functional issues. Preeminent among them and perhaps the most important and perhaps the longest-lived is the economic now economic, business and agricultural bureau of State It reports in a stovepipe up to and through the under secretary for economic affairs. So, in this matrixed organization I believe in the Christopher period of the Clinton administration the process was, from what I understand, very heavily stove piped. So that my predecessor Peter Tarnoff, in fact, had, as I did, supervision over the regional bureaus and to some extent while it wasn't formal in any way at all, I looked very carefully at the international organizations bureau which had a kind of similar relationship and to some extent the intelligence bureau was heavily used by my people although not part of my cluster.

What I did when I came in with respect to that was a couple of things that I think in my view helped to improve the performance of the State Department while I was there, although I'll let the historians judge that matter. I don't think they were permanent although Marc Grossman who succeeded me kept a number of them on. Although Marc would be the best source for that and I know he has given his own oral history. But what I tried to do and it came about in an uncanny way because as I was being asked to take this job, Stuart Eizenstat who had been, in fact, chief of staff to President Jimmy Carter and who was a superb individual and someone I had worked with for years, called me. I had gotten wind of the fact that he was also being solicited to become under secretary for economic affairs and he said, "I will take this job Tom if you do the political job." Nice of Stu to say that, it wasn't necessary. I said to Stu, "I always felt the same way about you Stu, so let's go ahead." Then he said "Well, I have one question for you." I said, "Sure, what is it?" He said, "Can your people attend my meetings?" and I said, "I don't know what you mean." He said, "Well, I understand that the regional bureaus report to you and are in somehow locked into you and the tradition is that they don't go to meetings that involve economic issues." I said, "Stu, that's a travesty, of course they can come to your meetings. One of the things that I will do is encourage that and if there is any problem you let me know if you have any difficulty and that will go ahead."



And that the second thing is that I will do the same and I will tell you that my approach will be that while I will certainly on the basis of my close relationship with them meet with the assistant secretaries for the regional bureaus whenever they want to meet on a confidential basis. But when we have a decisional meeting to discuss a foreign policy recommendations to the secretary or for my decision, I will try to have all the players in the room whether they are from the economic bureau or from the drugs and thugs bureau or from whatever bureau it is.” So we agreed to work that way and it worked out splendidly, I don’t think we ever had any problems.

I said to him that if I have a position on an issue that you are dealing with, I’ll make sure you get my views, but your decision is your decision. If I feel very strongly I’ll call you personally, but otherwise I’ll also have my staff assistants talk to your staff assistants so we know whether there is an issue. “You please feel free to do the same.” Well, Stuart and I, I think we never had an issue about who was handling a problem, we never had an issue about the fact that the other’s views were not considered. I went sometimes, but not frequently to Stuart’s meetings, I think he came to several of mine. But in effect we made sure that it worked well and we developed that same working relationship with the other under secretaries. So that was one piece of how, in fact, we attempted to try to change the working relationships.

*Q: Can you give any issue, which comes to mind on showing where political and economic....*

PICKERING: Oh sure, I think that one of the obvious ones was very much lodged with the Act of Congress which preceded our arrival, was the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. It in effect said we had to take sanctions against the Europeans who wouldn’t accept to carry out our sanctions against Libya and Iran. This, of course, raised havoc with the Europeans, so Stuart Eizenstat was charged with negotiating with the Europeans a way through this process. He did with consummate skill as always and with a good deal of good sense. But he involved me in that and I involved myself in making sure I knew where it was going, how it was tracking, because this had enormous political repercussions with our European friends and allies. So that is just one good example. ILSA was the name of the act, Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. So that was just one example. There weren’t a lot happily, but there were some. We worked together on these kinds of things but he was good to include me and I felt very, very strongly that he was doing a great job and taking into account all the things so I fully supported that process as it went ahead.

*Q: On the political side, usually bureaucratically, I won’t say the enemy, but the opponent sometimes is the Pentagon. On the economic side I would think it would be Treasury. Did you find that this was...*

PICKERING: Yes, it’s probably true although Stuart would be the person to talk to about it. He dealt with it, and Alan Larson subsequently, and they are better off giving you their feeling. That was not really my bailiwick; one had a tendency to think that. Let me keep on this subject though because I think there are a number of other things here.

The second thing that I did was to have a regular weekly meeting for an hour in my office with the assistant secretaries of the regional bureaus It was essentially to talk them in a group but with no staff, about the Department, it’s future, its working relationships and how things should go. I

didn't try to do a substantive meeting. although occasionally at the end of the meeting we would run quickly around the room and say what's on your mind I need to be aware of or what are you working on, where are you, are you stuck anything I can help you on? They frequently took the initiative to run those things up the line, but it wasn't an effort to try and do that kind of meeting so much as to talk about okay what personnel policy issues that are coming along that are going to affect you and the bureaus and how and in what way can I be helpful with the under secretary for management on those questions? Or what's going on out in the field that's sort of pinching - that isn't allowing things to work very well? Is it a common or even an individual problem for a bureau like yours? They usually came when they were in town or they sent their principal deputies when they were not, but it was just an opportunity to have that kind of conversation on an open basis.

The third thing I did was picking up on that, I said to the assistant secretary's that as far as I was concerned they were reporting directly to the secretary of State -- that was the person for whom they worked. That relationship was absolutely critical and in that regard they should look at me as an extension of the secretary of State and that I would pick up on lots of the issues she could not deal with., I would keep her informed when necessary. But I said this means that at least when I'm around and you go into a meeting with the secretary you're the first person who speaks, you make the policy recommendation, it's your responsibility. I said, "I will know in advance what you are going to do, you and I will have probably have talked about that." But I said, "If I have an idea or a comment you will hear from me beforehand or if necessary at the meeting with the secretary, but it will not be my meeting, it will be your meeting. I want you to develop that responsibility." I said, "I don't like layering. I'm here to amplify and help to support you to shortstop stuff that the secretary doesn't have to deal with and help you to deal with those questions and to deal with a bunch of the interagency things. But the stove piping meant that, in fact, lots of stuff only was dealt with at the secretary's level because, in fact, the stovepipes only met at her level. I said that's ludicrous, that can't continue to work." "In addition, lots of stuff fell between the stools and never got dealt with either because the assistant secretary's couldn't organize the meeting to get them dealt with across the board or couldn't make a decision or alternatively there wasn't any interest at the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> floor because of necessity the secretary can only deal with a certain number of problems or issues at the highest priority. Or it was in part dictated by the White House. If the rest of the stuff rolls around on the floor and doesn't get resolved, then, in fact, we have a big set of problems coming down the road that goes up to the secretary or, in fact, we let it go by disquietude and it doesn't get handled." So I said, "Look at me to fill into those niches and look at the other under secretaries to do that." And it sort of worked pretty well that way; we attempted to make sure, in fact, that we covered the world and that we filled in on all questions so they didn't rest unattended in the bureaus.

*Q: Could you as well get the other undersecretary's together and say okay we have all these bits and pieces let's take care of these and not bother the secretary?*

PICKERING: Generally speaking the others followed the same pattern and didn't push stuff up to the secretary that either she didn't call for or they knew she wasn't working on or they didn't feel because, in fact, it involved the secretary of Defense or the NSC advisor that she had to decide. We tried to work it that way and we kept her informed of the things that we were working on to resolve. But I can remember my first week in office, I came in and the secretary's

chief of staff called me and said, "We've got some issues and problems in Ghana, can you take care of these, we don't know what to do, we're new." So I said, "Sure." I called her back later and said we will be dealing with this one this way and it was all fairly easy stuff. She said, "Oh, I'm so relieved we've been here for four or five weeks all by ourselves and we don't know what to do with all of these things. It's very tough and we don't understand most of them and are too busy to try and deal with them." So I did that.

The other role I think the under secretary for political affairs plays is a very informal role but is, in effect, when the under secretary for political affairs is a Foreign Service officer or had been a Foreign Service officer. I was actually a Foreign Service officer and I had retired several months before Madeleine asked me to come back. I was given the option, which I took, of becoming again a Foreign Service officer even though I was over the age of 65, because she had the authority to do that and it was the one way I had of, in effect, I was able then to continue to accumulate time on my retirement as a Foreign Service Officer even though I had to suspend my pension. Actually in that circumstance you got your cost of living increments, you never realized it while serving, but it was added into your pension at the time you retired again. So there was, in fact, some advantage so that worked out very well. But that means, in fact, that at the end you have to keep an eye on the Foreign Service and help to represent Foreign Service interests. Because the under secretary for management had little or no knowledge of the history and background of the Foreign Service when she came on board, Bonnie Cohen, she frequently turned to me for ideas and suggestions and for comments, which I was very grateful to give. In fact, when I had heard about things that I thought she needed to hear from me on, I took the opportunity to talk to her and she was receptive.

One of the things, of course, that constantly pressed on us was that the security people felt that we should close certain posts because certainly standards of security couldn't be met. This of course, increased in intensity after we lost the embassies to bombing in Nairobi and in Dar es Salaam. My role was to be sure that we had a diplomacy and we could carry it out effectively. So in effect, in a couple of places like Khartoum and Dushanbe in Tajikistan we had to kind of pull back our staff but I tried to avoid closing the staff by making sure we had people, individuals there all the time at least to keep the door open who were keeping their head down and watching out for security. But that was the beginning of what later evolved in a report within this decade called *The Embassy of the Future*, in fact, saying while total avoidance of a risk would mean the closing of embassies right, left and center, we had in order to meet our responsibilities to the public and to the administration and to the president and the secretary to manage risks rather than be involved in total risk avoidance. Therefore, we had to adopt postures and approaches to embassies that made that happen. Those kinds of things that overall we should 'de-stovepipe' in the State Department -- we should find a way to support the secretary without having to jam up her schedule -- and then find a way to make decisions at levels below the secretary in a lot of questions that come along.

We also had a big role in the interagency and let me talk about that and then let me go on to the question of changes.

*Q: One question though is you talk about the destovepiping. The Pentagon has gone through this, they try to make everybody purple at a certain level which means they think in terms of*

*military rather than Army, Navy or Air Force and they mix up their staffs and all that. Was there any effort on our part to get more economic/counselor/administrative officers working in joint projects is not the word but joint types of work or not?*

PICKERING: I think not in a kind of serious study way as Henry Kissinger did when he had the global restructuring -- where he made a huge effort in GLOP to change a lot of this. But it was true that good officers, particularly at the top of the level in other cones, were, not frequently but from time to time, assigned to work in positions, which, in fact, were outside of their cone, because they had demonstrated capability and we thought that the diversity would benefit them. I guess I would have to say that my career at least geographically is representative of the fact that I had no permanent home in a bureau. I worked both eight years in AF and eight years in NEA, in Africa and the Middle East among other things, but I also had ambassadorial assignments in Central America, in WHA; in Moscow which was then S/NIS which later became re-amalgamated with EUR; and in South Asia which had been in the course of being set up as a separate bureau while I was there. I was there when it was more NEA than it was South Asia; but it was becoming South Asia. In effect, I had this enormous advantage of having worked in a lot of different bureaus and I had the disadvantage of not having a kind of home bureau, although a couple of them, particularly NEA, where I always considered myself particularly close to them because of my service in the region. I don't know if they considered me part of their mafia but there was never a problem in getting along in working with them.

Also I had an unusual career, this is just an aside, I never worked in a regional bureau in Washington, I only worked in functional bureaus in Washington including heading one. I would say that the interagency was extremely interesting. When I first arrived one of the things that struck me and I talked to Sandy about it because I went over and called on Sandy Berger who was the National Security Adviser. I said Sandy I don't think you're making adequate use of the third level of the National Security system, the first level being the NSC principals. The second level vastly over worked was the deputies committee as I later found out because I had a lot to do with it. And the third level was essentially the assistant secretaries of State and Defense and the senior directors of the NSC, particularly in the geographic regions. They were supposed to have working groups, and indeed, those groups were supposed to produce material that could be considered by the deputies committee. Now the deputies committee was certainly Strobe's and Strobe was, as the deputy secretary, the person who went. Strobe had special interests in places like...

*Q: Strobe Talbott.*

PICKERING: like Indian nuclear and Russia and issues of that sort. I told Strobe when I came in because I had come directly from Russia and had previously worked for a short time in India, that I would not try to second-guess those. But Strobe said, "Look, I want to have you involved in those issues as they come along." He was good, he did involve me and so I sat with him on some of those questions. But he did essentially Indian nuclear and I did a good bit of the Indian non-nuclear stuff when it came along and it was coordinated. Rick Inderfurth, who ran the bureau, made sure that each of us was involved in the pieces we needed to be and knew what was going on. I watched Russia although we had a very strong Russia team. I got involved in it from time to time when I thought I had a thought to contribute. But on the interagency, many of the

other issues Strobe left to me, so I did issues like Bosnia and Kosovo. I did a lot of the counter terrorism activity. I went in some issues where I had been involved, but when there was a principal's meeting and Madeleine would want me to go along. But we got involved in this and it meant, in fact, to go back to my original point, not using the third level very effectively. We often in the deputies committee went from issue to issue and the only preparation we had was an excellent preparation of the regional or functional bureaus in the State Department because they were told we were having a meeting in a half an hour and they had to get something up to us. We then had to go in with our own knowledge, with our own background with what preparation we had and work the problem as if we were the desk officers, de novo. It was not a terribly satisfactory way to run the issue.

Often we would then begin with the intelligence report, a good bit of it sometimes was new so we were constantly having to work the issue, to synthesize the answers and I was concerned that we spent an awful lot of time at critical points on some key issues on what the White House press guidance should be. In my view, while extremely important and had to be very carefully handled, was not something that necessarily our group which involved very senior people across the interagency had to spend a half an hour kind parsing through in infinite detail what the White House staff was probably confident working with folks in the departments at a slightly lower level to put together.

I had raised with Sandy my concern that we were not using the third level, it wasn't preparing the meetings well enough and that we were going to be taxed. Well I turned out to be 100 percent right. Sandy for multiple reasons, in part because Sandy wanted to make sure that everything was well enough controlled, that the president would never be embarrassed, which was a huge imperative for the National Security Council leader, particularly because in the past some of these things had happened, he wanted to be sure that the meetings were done by him or Jim Steinberg his deputy.

Secondly, perhaps it was because he was not sure, in fact, that these organizations had proven that they could work very effectively at doing this job. There was often pulling and tugging between the assistant secretary of State and the White House senior director for the region. In some of these cases, we were not necessarily working in exactly the same strategy or objectives or dividing lines. The regional divisions tended to be awkward particularly between State and Defense and the DoD command structure.

The other interesting set of issues, aside from the high level ones, in which I had an opportunity to work frequently with Defense was the question of the NEOs, Non-combatant Evacuations, in which it was almost always true we had differences. We had a developing situations which had a propensity to lead to the fact or to the point where we might have to pull out, not just embassy personnel, but also non-official Americans. The principal way of doing this and the preferred way was to make that decision fairly early and to use the State Department's capacity to contract for civil aircraft and to move civil aircraft in under contract and take people out on that basis -- before the situation got into a shooting proposition or indeed before it was no longer possible for other reasons to get civil aircraft in and we had to turn to the military. The military were consistently and constantly driven around the bend by the fact that often for good political

reasons, it was not in our political interest publicly to recognize a deteriorating situation. As a result enter into a domestic conflict in one-way or another...

*Q: It shows lack of confidence.*

PICKERING: ...it was contributing exactly to that -- a lack of confidence or favoring one side or another in a situation. The Defense Department, of course, was constantly tugging at us to get these people out before they had to deal with it. A lot of these came up in Africa where there was not a permanent Defense Department presence or even one nearby. Often on the African NEOS, and we had a number of them in West Africa, we would face the situation that would constantly bedevil both departments. One was that the Defense Department deployment situation was such that naval forces took a long time to get there and sometimes it would be days away and that the airfield would always be a contested zone and they didn't want to go in, for all good reasons, to a shooting situation at an airport.

Then the second question was who was going to pay for this? Now the Defense Department has an enormous budget, but it was constantly not wanting to take on these extra excursions in which it would have to pay often some significant amounts of money. Of course, the State Department did not have huge sums in its larder for which to pay the Defense Department for these very expensive operations because when we got the bill from Defense it was usually pretty large and we had no account or appropriation to handle it. We constantly battled over that and I can remember that Walt Slocum and I worked for a long time on a memorandum of understanding in which each of us tried to make sure, in fact, that departmental interests were well defended but that we also could perform the mission. It was hard, it was always irritating and it was always a serious problem.

We had similar sets of problems with the FBI and I will just give you this one more example. The FBI had always wanted to either deny visas or, in fact, carry out investigative activities and operations, sometimes likely to lead to colossal embarrassment to the United States, in situations they felt were extremely important and urgent. Of course the FBI in those days had still a law enforcement bias and felt that evidence was particularly important to keeping in a narrow chain, coming out of a grand jury process in which it was not possible fully to brief the State Department on these occasions. So with them we had two sets of issues. One, was that they wanted us to reach from our perspective an appropriate conclusion on the basis of a black box or alternatively that the evidence they had been able to present to us was so unpersuasive that it was not worth the risk of the embarrassment that might result if the action they wanted to undertake was likely or could become public. So we had those kinds of tugs. It was always very clear that the FBI considered the State Department nothing but a bunch of political wimps whose lack of hairy-chestedness always stood in the way of their protecting the public against spies and in carrying out their law enforcement functions in the best J. Edgar Hoover tradition. Now that's a hyperbolic explanation, but those were the pressures and the tendencies at word

While I had superb relationships with Louie Freeh who was running the FBI and got involved in a lot of issues, his folks down the line were not so happy with basically our disagreements over these questions which came naturally out of our separate, different and somewhat perverse cross relationships on the whole set of problems. But across the interagency landscape, not at what I

would call the highest level but at the next level down, we had to continue to work to resolve these problems and there was no standard operating procedure you could turn to readily to make them happen.

*Q: In many ways the politics of Washington are far more both devious and complicated than dealing with foreign governments.*

PICKERING: Well I think that's right. On the other hand, I have to tell you when I worked in political/military affairs back it would have been in the late '70s, our relationships with the Defense Department were so poisonous and so devastatingly bad, particularly between Secretary Rogers and Secretary Laird, that when I became under secretary I was very pleased and delighted by the degree of cooperation. The Clinton administration in the second period had engendered a set of cooperative feelings about relations that transcended some of these awful problems that I had experienced in those days.

*Q: Your successor Mark Grossman talked about his counterpart at the Pentagon I think, I'm not sure who it was. Frank?*

PICKERING: Doug Feith.

*Q: They weren't supposed to talk to each other under Rumsfeld.*

PICKERING: Under Rumsfeld's rules and so you see it slipped back again.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: In my time, Bill Cohen and Madeleine Albright didn't agree always on everything, but they were working as a team. They worked hard to sort out their disagreements and that made the process fairly easy. The second thing I would like to discuss this morning is how we then went about taking a look at how we could (in addition to the things that I have mentioned already in terms of the execution of my job) move the State Department forward. Now, a lot of these had come into our ken as structural problem Secretary Albright was looking at these and, so I asked Madeline if I could make a set of suggestions to her on structural questions. I brought in a number of people to work with me. Ruth Whiteside worked with me, Nancy Ely-Raphel worked with me as well as couple other folks who actually had spent a lot of time in various parts of the bureaucracy and a whole series of papers was prepared.

I started out with the following conclusion -- that the secretary had too many direct reports. In those days there were well over forty, mainly assistant secretaries and special assistants and envoys and the like. Under Secretary Rice, we counted over sixty. Well no secretary, busy as the secretary of State is, can possibly manage the operation of the Department and be serious about dealing with that number of direct reports. Several things happened to take us there. The Department of State was constantly responding to new issues. New issues when they came up were often not put into the regular bureaucracy, but either designated for the creation of a new special office or a new special envoy, czar or leader. These individuals were most often attached to the office of the secretary because they were all considered important enough to be under the

secretary's direct purview. So in the State Department's nomenclature terms they were all an S/ Ess slash. The S designated that they were part of the secretary's office and the slash was followed by other letters which the State Department uses to designate its bureaus and offices -- letters that relate to that particular office. So these built up over a period of time. What we had was basically a nearly cancerous growth in the secretary's office. The Hill also played a role. In the Congress, advocates of particular policies or work on particular issues would approach the Department and ask that a new bureau or office be created to treat with that subject. They liked to insist that their favorite area or subject should be in charge of someone reporting directly to the secretary. Seemingly, they never asked or cared about how many were already directly reporting to the secretary and therefore how much time their favorite issue or subject would actually get for consideration by the secretary herself.

We had at the same time over the years mainly pressure from the Congress to create new functional bureaus to represent interests that they considered important. Jimmy Carter created the human rights bureau in part or had it created because of his own interest and it was important. We created a bureau for international narcotics and criminal affairs, we created a bureau for population refugees and migration, we created bureaus or essentially mini-bureaus or half bureaus for things like international communications and these tended to build up. Every once and a while this pressure on the tectonic plates of the Department would release an earthquake and someone, Henry Kissinger did it, would gather up these activities accumulated in the secretary's office and either reassign them to existing bureaus or create a new bureau for those with common or shared interests. For example, the OES bureau, oceans and environment and science, was created before I headed it by an effort on Kissinger's part to clean up, reduce the number of direct reports and provide a set of similar responsibilities to someone at the assistant secretary level.

These were these kinds of approaches that I wanted to take. So I looked at the State Department and I decided for myself there were four kinds of bureaus in the State Department. There were regional bureaus and I mentioned sometime ago that they were the power houses because they had the money and the assignments overseas. The money was there to run the embassies and they oversaw the field establishment. That meant in many ways they had lots of responsibilities for issues like field personnel assignment which, of course, gave them huge power in the State Department -- they had jobs for people to go to. The functional bureaus, which were accumulating had, in fact, particular responsibilities -- some very narrow and some very broad. The economic and business bureau that I mentioned earlier was very important in policy terms especially. And some had a great deal of money for programs -- population, refugees and migration, got into the billion dollar budget area. Some of that overlapped with AID. So there are in addition to that what I would call management bureaus -- those under the purview of the under secretary for management, things like administration and operations and finance. And finally, there are service bureaus -- the legal advisors office, the bureau of Congressional relations, the bureau of intelligence and research and so on. They are not specifically administrative but they, in fact, provide a valuable and indeed invaluable support function outside either the functional or the regional clusters.

My own view was that one of the things that could be done was to reduce each of these clusters to no more than five or six bureaus. We provided a plan to do that. In addition to that we attempted to sweep up the various envoys and special assistants and move them either into



existing bureaus or into a new bureau where that was necessary. Things like that included counter terrorism that had kind of its own personal perpetual existence because of the importance of the subject. While it was not a bureau -- it was looked at as a staff. It could not be easily turned into a part of the bureau for narcotics and crime where it was a more logical fit because of the importance of the subject on its own.

One of the largest service bureaus is the diplomatic security bureau. Security took on increasing importance as terrorist threats increased. We succeeded in making a proposal to move back in the direction of fewer, larger bureaus -- a quite radical proposal. We also made a proposal to reduce the number of under secretaries which then had proliferated I think from three to six or seven as the Department moved ahead. I resisted the notion that we should have two-deputy secretary's, which has now come about.

We also proposed that, in effect, as we moved ahead, the Department adopt a model from the Defense department that organizations like AID and USIS could become agencies of the Department of State with a standalone capability for administration and management. They could use the Foreign Service personnel system and might be centrally budgeted. We suggested this because they required project and program management skills, not present in the rest of the Foreign Service. A foreign service cone could be created for the program, development and public diplomacy skilled people. We should recognize that they had essentially implementation functions well beyond where the State Department was, but best performed around a cohesive whole rather than separated into distinct bureaus in the State Department. They needed to have some independence regarding recruitment, assignments and promotions and the State department agency concept could provide that kind of flexibility while still keeping overall policy direction in the hands of the secretary.

We also advocated very strongly the notion that there should be back-to-back location of bureaus in the building where that could work. This comes out of Vietnam experience and at one point Latin America and the Alliance for Progress where the assistance function became terribly important. We arranged actually for seating in the State Department of the AID people devoted to Vietnam and in the earlier days to Latin America side-by-side with their geographic bureau counterparts, so there would be the natural give and take because assistance was such a critical part of our effectiveness. This worked fairly well.

I also felt strongly that the State Department should have no more than three or four layers for decision making if it was going to operate effectively. That meant that the secretary at the top, the assistant secretaries below and the country directors and desk officers should be the principal players in those three or four layers. It also meant that deputy and under secretaries, as I have said before, serve to fill out the secretary's work -- what has to be done in the top layer. They should not be closed stovepipes of similar organizations and they should not be layers themselves through which paper and clearances have to pass. Similarly, deputy assistant secretaries should be alter egos and decision makers for the assistant secretaries as well as close advisors and colleagues. Making them into layers which can slow or stop the flow of decision making doesn't add much except more time. The motto for those individuals should be decide, or get out of the way, if a higher level is thought to be necessary for a decision. Hopefully, this could serve to push decision making down in the department. It cannot mean fast tracking

everything through the regional bureaus, but it does mean that they and the functional bureaus have to work together and with others in the policy process rather than spend a lot of time on turf fights.

Having deputies and unders work on decision making means that they must as they decide consider all aspects of an issue and that requires both functional and regional bureaus to work more closely on issues as I have noted.

We also recommended that some of the State bureaus with assistance type programs be amalgamated with AID -- that the populations, refugees and migration bureau performed functions that were very close to AID's emergency assistance, the office of foreign disaster relief and the AID humanitarian bureau. So why not amalgamate the budgets, the functions. I felt we should start out moving in this direction by having a single common assistant secretary for the function, from AID or State perhaps in rotation, even if we had two bureaus, as a way in a sense to get this synergy.

I also felt very strongly that mini bureaus had mini-clout and that interagency the most important assistant secretaries were the ones who had large responsibilities, often with large amounts of money, but often obviously with significant constituencies both interagency and on the Hill. I didn't think it was necessary to create under secretaries to be able to have people who could sit intelligently in the interagency process and represent the Department. I believed that the degree to which we were going to be successful was the degree to which we vested the State Department officers with the responsibilities and chose them carefully. Indeed the decision-making potential and the recommendation role that the most effective assistant secretaries had was, as we looked at it, greater than those were the issues were sub-divided or only a small piece of the bigger pie. We went around and saw that the more we fractionated those bureaus and jobs, the less effective they were going to be interagency. Here are of course other issues as well as I have noted. Strong players can overcome weak structure. And strong structure cannot empower weak players. But why handicap a great department of government with a structure that is less effective than it might be.

*Q: And at the undersecretary level sort of the political process you end up with often a less expert person than you have as an assistant secretary.*

PICKERING: I think that is right. I was particularly lucky that I came to the office with service in a lot of bureaus in a lot of regions. But I also, because of the fact that I had moved from embassy to embassy for sixteen years before I came back and had learned to learn new jobs. Therefore, I had some of the capability to become rapidly assimilated in the job. I could learn new briefs fairly quickly because I'd been doing that for most of my life. I think that my successors in that job Mark Grossman, Nick Burns and Bill Burns all have followed in the Foreign Service tradition, happily because at the time I arrived, for the same reasons. One of the reasons I had retired from the State Department after Moscow was that I no longer had any embassies I was seriously interested in and I didn't think on the basis that, almost all of the under secretaries for political affairs had recently come from outside, that I had a chance for the job and I thought it would stay that way.

Q: Also, quite frankly, they don't bring that much with them often.

PICKERING: I think that....

*Q: It's the Washington political process, I guess.*

PICKERING: I think it is in the Washington political process some of these people are awfully good, but they don't bring a lot of the area knowledge and the working knowledge of the way in which the government performs. Some of the outside people that I worked with as under secretary were actually superb, so it wasn't a question necessarily that every outsider was ill equipped. I suppose you could make the same point that a lot of the insiders didn't do as well as they should have, but we will leave that open.

*Q: You are looking for expertise.*

PICKERING: Yes, but you are looking for a combination of expertise, management skills and ability to operate interagency and an ability, obviously, to get along with other people because it is really quite critically important to do that.

*Q: Well Tom I know you want to stop at this point. The next time when we talk I would like to bring up what, I think, is a very important element of the organization that is the demise of USIA.*

PICKERING: I would and we can talk about that.

*Q: And which frankly to me disturbs me a great deal.*

PICKERING: And I will tell you where I am on that. I just want to close this off with one thing. We were not able to do as much as we could. The secretary accepted the fact that she and Strobe and I should have a thorough budget review process which was one of the recommendations that came up, of all the State Department bureau budget submissions. We should be quite ruthless in examining them and asking questions. I believe that went ahead quite well. What I had provided for Madeline was too big a bite and I'll tell you why. We are in an impossible conundrum in reforming the State Department. The time to make the change is ideally as a new secretary comes in and before all the people are appointed. You and I know that the imperative for a new secretary is to appoint the people and often to respond to White House pressure to take people on all these jobs, But if in fact, the reform is to streamline, to take away a number of these jobs then, in fact, it is totally contrary in the short term to the interest of the State Department to appoint all these people.

So the next stage is that the secretary by her own or his appointment is totally stopped from, in fact, slimming down the State Department, realigning it and changing spans of authority, building up the assistant secretaries, reducing the management load of the people up on the top floor and making some sense of the bureaucracy. The fact she would have to go ahead and fire all the people she just appointed -- many at the behest of the White House -- is a real road block.

Of course then the other issue is the brand new secretary doesn't know the department, so is quite distrustful of the bureaucracy and the foreign service as I have noted. They all come in from the outside. They've all been told by everybody that you have to distrust the foreign service because it will take you over. They don't understand that the foreign service is there waiting for leadership and delighted to contribute ideas and in my view quite disciplined in terms of accepting what the secretary decides. It is looking for strong secretary. So new secretaries are often skeptical and distrustful. They don't have enough knowledge about how the department works and they can't be confident in making changes. They say it worked for the last person I'll make it work for me. When they can really know enough is of course, their last year in office. In their last year the last thing in the world they want to do is take on the Congress, and to some extent the White House, to make all these changes which they will never enjoy the benefit of and they enthusiastically leave it all to their successor. There is a psychology about this that makes it almost impossible, in my view, to make fundamental reforms in the State Department. The only way to do it is to have a secretary who is prepared to take this burden, because it can't be taken at a lower level, the secretary has to do this and it's extremely hard to do. A secretary in order to do this has to develop some trust in those advising on what changes should be made. They have to come at it at the beginning of the administration or near the end because of the personnel implications in the department. Ideally, many of these changes can be made without going to Congress. Where that comes in, the process is even more difficult for a new or long serving secretary.

I think the final point and I'll want to talk about this the next time is the money piece and how to fund the State Department and where to go and what to do. So we have a fair amount out there to keep talking about. But I think these are important issues Stu.

*Q: Oh yeah.*

*Q: All right today is the...*

PICKERING: Cinco de Mayo.

*Q: Cinco de Mayo, all right, 2009. Tom, we're talking about the various things that you felt that needed changing with the State Department, sort of basically structures and all. You wanted to talk about the money, should we talk about the money and then come back?*

PICKERING: Let me talk a little more about structures first because I don't think we've covered all that. At the end I talked about why secretaries find it hard to change the State Department and why, in fact, only the secretary's can do that. It involves obviously convincing the White House and the Congress of changes, then let's go into the money picture as much as we can.

I think that first and foremost we've got a State Department that has genuinely very good people. I'm a little concerned at the moment by what I would call a fairly radical readjustment of what happened under Wriston after world war II.

*Q: It was a hard time; we came in about '54 or '55.*

PICKERING: The Department had gone through the war with the foreign service mainly stuck overseas and a large civil service manning the jobs in Washington. This was not good for either service. For the foreign service there was a need to get home and understand what was happening in the US. For those manning the jobs in Washington, they needed first hand and continuing experience in developments overseas and how to think about the ways to manage that part in our foreign policy. There then not were enough positions in Washington to make sure that rotation with the field took place effectively. There were several reasons for this. One was that it was extremely important to have people with real live current experience from overseas working in Washington on a wide-range of questions. Secondly, it was very important to have Foreign Service officers serve in the United States. This is so that local-itis didn't grab hold in a serious way, either as a general proposition from serving overseas for a long time, or as a particular proposition of being captured, as you like, by the culture of a foreign country. Inevitably people do tend to get associated with and interested in a foreign country where they serve. Increasingly, they tend to become advocates of the foreign country. I think they try do it on an entirely acceptable basis; that it's entirely in the U.S. interest to have good relations with country X. The way to do that is to look after country X interests in terms of their relationship with the United States; those are hard things to crack. Rotation has been successful in dealing with issues of objectivity.

I had the peculiar experience of being overseas or out of Washington and out of a Washington job from roughly early or mid-1981 until the end of 1996, because I was an ambassador and, therefore, not subject to the requirements to return to the U.S. While my longest tour during that period was slightly under four years and my shortest was slightly over two years, I don't think I became totally captured by anybody least of all the Russians in this particular endeavor. My shortest service was actually nine months in India. That in total, 16 years, it is a long time to serve outside Washington; I was in New York almost four years at that period, just to give you a feeling.

It is important to look at tour lengths and it is even more important to look at now the growth in permanent civil service positions in the Department. The latter does a couple of things. It tends to crowd out the possibilities of Foreign Service officers rotating in. Civil servants have a job and can stay in it until they move up the ladder. Foreign service officers are committed to regular rotations. Some bureaus, mainly functional bureaus, tend to get more captured because the civil service is seen as occupying technical jobs and rotational arrangements for them are much more rigid and much less flexible. It is not possible once they occupy the position to open up jobs that would benefit from having a tour with the Foreign Service officer. They do not necessary have to be captured by the Foreign Service, but the more the department becomes civil service the more we lose the benefit of first hand overseas experience in Washington and the more we lose jobs that the foreign service can and should fill in Washington. We should also keep clearly in mind why we have a foreign service. It was created, based on a military model to some extent, to assure that officers would go anywhere, that entry was through competition and promotion was based on merit. So I'm a little bit concerned by that and I think that some bureaus, political/military, I've been told, and others have been pretty much what I would call civil service-ized when they could benefit from a finer balance of foreign service and civil service people.

I also think it is a good idea for State Department civil service officers to have an opportunity to have an overseas tour and that is useful just as I was very favorable to the CIA program to have intelligence analysts from their analytical shops serve overseas. I think some State civil service, INR people, could benefit from that. I also see some real benefits of the civil service in providing continuity and indeed stability in things like intelligence analysis or functional bureaus or indeed in regional bureaus; there have been civil service personnel in the regional bureaus who became in a sense the collective memory of the bureau. But now I think that that's one set of issues that is excessively moving in the wrong direction and I think we need to pay some attention to that.

*Q: Well something that happened, and this was after I retired, it became much more desirable for Foreign Service officers to particularly as they got more senior get ready to retire to serve in Washington.*

PICKERING: I think that's an error of the pay system which AFSA has been struggling to change and, of course, I had the opportunity just three weeks ago to talk about that in some testimony I gave on diplomacy and how it can shoot itself in the foot. This was particularly relevant to places like Africa. I think that has to be changed. I think it's a crazy system where over the years we gave people inducements to serve in difficult places because there was a danger or physical hardship or health hardship. Now suddenly because of a very reasonable arrangement that civil service individuals in the United States could not be all compensated at the same level given the varying costs of living around the United States, it has changed. The foreign service should be included since the new system has become a punishment in effect in monetary terms to go to an overseas assignment and even to go to an overseas assignment with extra pay benefits unless it is one of those areas where the extra pay benefits are inordinately large because of the extreme danger. People want to spend their last three years in Washington because it establishes a higher pay scale for their retirement income.

So that's I think strange and it's also hard to do this when many more posts are now no longer family posts and where individuals have to go alone. I also think that short tours make sense in such posts, but short tours wreak their own havoc at the posts, particularly tours of one-year or less. So I think that somehow we need to find a way to do that and my view would be we should begin to reexamine the security arrangements at overseas posts that are marginally placed in the separate tour category. We need to begin to find ways to reopen those and recognize and understand that we can't totally avoid security dangers. We have to teach people and their families in difficult posts how to manage. I could see posts that are spouse only and not children being a halfway house in this process to try to civilize the working arrangements that people have to work under.

I think there is another question having to do often with the Washington bureaucracy The thing that bothers me most at the moment is the question of issues of span of control and stove piping in the State Department and they are intimately related. I begin with the notion that the State Department is a matrixed organization. One set of very powerful influences represent our need to and our ability to organize ourselves in effect to get along with foreign countries as still principal players in the international establishment.

The other set is to organize ourselves around policy areas, we call them functional areas, that have to do with our necessity to maintain a consistent policy across the board in particular areas of responsibility. That approach, in fact, can be defended on a general basis and so we don't have one policy on human rights in Rwanda and another policy in human rights in the UK and another policy in human rights in China. We have a tendency to slip on some of these things but at least the human rights bureau has the function of dealing with the formulation of those policies -- to fight for the provision of a general policy and to fight over a period of time for the inclusion of their policy issues in the focus of the country-related, regional bureaus. What we have done over the years is allowed the Congress too much to control our organization both regionally and functionally. Interestingly enough, the Congress is primarily responsible for setting up the South Asia bureau. That has been now made a little more sane by combining South and Central Asia so that instead of having one bureau for eight countries and one bureau with 55 or 60 we have tried to even out the responsibility.

Assistant secretary jobs are extremely important. They need to be manned by the best people we have. I believe that they should report directly to the secretary of State and that the under secretary should not be a reporting line, but, in fact, be seen as surrogates for the secretary of State. In that role they should be able to deal with problems that shouldn't have to go to the secretary of State or the deputy for decision

Secondly, that in the creation of bureaus we ought to move toward a pattern where we have, in effect, no more than 20-25 bureaus in the State Department. We now have well over 40. Certainly we have 40 people of assistant secretary rank and growing. Every once in a while what used to happen was that we would scarf up individuals who naturally were created because their crisis was important as appendages of the secretary's office. So they all began as something that in the State Department terms was S/ somebody. Counter terrorism has stayed there for example. Over the years as we proceeded, the OES bureau was originally created to bring together a lot of science-related functions or like-minded functions built around the notion that science played a serious enough role in their activities to put them in a bureau.

At the moment, I would think of a State Department with five regional bureaus. It's a little hard now to think about what you would do with South Asia and Central Asia, but some of it could be incorporated either in East Asia or in the Middle East or back into the European bureau. More of it I think should gravitate toward East Asia even though the tradition in East Asia is to stop their world somewhere along the Irrawaddy and somewhere in Tibet. But however you look at it I think it would be a reasonable balance.

Then with five regional bureaus we ought to think about finding a way to create in effect, five functional bureaus and bring those together. A number of our functional bureaus carry out tasks, which are heavily into programs. Some of them have over a billion dollars worth of budgetary money and programs and they are in that case very much like AID. And having brought in effect the AID into the State Department as an agency it might make some sense for us to think about taking some of these functional bureaus, which are highly programmatic...

*Q: Could you name some...*

PICKERING: Well population and refugees is one and it does a lot of refugee programs. It obviously looks after the policy areas as well, but there is no reason, with AID as a kind of stand-alone agency inside the State Department, where the programmatic issues and management couldn't come together in AID. The policy issues would stay part of the State Department policy process. So I think that there are a number of places for improvement there. The AID disaster relief bureau could work with at least some of the humanitarian programs, but you could find ways to bring them together.

I always thought one way to start bringing them together, even if you couldn't organizationally do it right away, was to appoint one individual who would both be an assistant secretary of State and an assistant administrator of AID. In effect to combine the bureaus under one direction. I also think it would be extremely useful, but now almost impossible given where AID is located, but in places where it is quite important to try to locate some of the AID functions back-to-back with the State Department regional functions.

But let's say you could get the functional bureaus down to five. I would take quite a bit of work and that would be the major area of reorganization. In addition, it seems that you would also have five administrative bureaus which are pretty well organized and they do work in a stove pipe for the under secretary for management and there is some reason to do that. Although obviously they also work very closely with the regional bureaus who have to deal with them for personnel problems, for initial allocations of funding, for accountability on the spending of funding and things of that sort.

Then we have what I would call five service bureaus, L and H, Congressional Relations and the Legal Advisors office. INR, in a sense, fits into that it serves the whole Department. So I think we could probably end up with five service bureaus too. But that would give a span of control that would make some sense. I would also insist, and this happened when I was there as under secretary, that when policy issues come up to the under secretary level and beyond, they not be stove piped, that. Everybody should be sitting in the room representing all of the bureaus that have a serious interest in the problem and have something to say about it in any decisional discussion of the question. So whoever has to make the decision, in effect, isn't making decisions only under the regional bureau stovepipe. It should be also the same way on the economic side and so on.

It would be useful to think about reducing the number of under secretaries, although it makes sense to have one for political affairs, it makes sense to have one for economic affairs and it probably makes sense to have one for the arms control cluster, which is pretty big. I don't know but I suspect that people will argue well we need one for global affairs although I think that's less necessary. I would in return for public diplomacy see if you couldn't move public diplomacy back together as a second stand-alone agency inside the State Department something like AID now has. It just seems to me they do a lot of programmatic work and they have a different culture. Maybe one is needed for management, but maybe with a second Deputy for management-related issues, something less than an under secretary would suffice. Totally breaking them up into a bureau structure and sprinkling them around the State Department has lost some of the cohesion. I believe that it is necessary to combine things like educational and cultural exchanges and media support and work on the new media which is pretty much done in the field by public affairs



officers and their teams. To have those separated out in the Department in a way that makes them part of a different culture is in my view seriously handicapping our agility. We need that to support our objectives -- to be useful.

I would pull most of the public diplomacy officers out of the regional bureaus; but I would leave a small cadre there. I would create, probably in the State Department -- in a sense expand the people who now, in media support, provide the materials and the data to the public diplomacy teams out in the fields, called IIP, into a single, new bureau. This would combine both the regional support activities and what I would call the media and public support so that you had these two big pieces of USIA operating together. I would put those in an agency that was able to look across the board at public diplomacy and work very closely with the regional bureaus to support it. The immersion of USIA into the regional bureaus has tended to regionalize them to a much greater extent than is necessary. I would rather than do that to allow the kind of focus and attention on their functions which we need. It has broken them up for budgetary purposes which I think lacks the kind of cohesion we need to run a coherent public diplomacy operation.

*Q: As you say, it is a separate culture. These are people who as I would say the consular function is a separate culture and to try to dissipate this you end up by bringing people who aren't particularly suited for it.*

PICKERING: You do and I think we have to have a fairly rigid protection of the public diplomacy people in the personnel cone system, so that they are not drawn frequently off on rotational assignments. I think it's good for them to have some and I think it's good for political officers and economic officers to have rotational assignments into PD, but not for long periods of time. The idea of having two separate agencies in the Department which do a lot of program management is important because it can help build a program management culture and draw on people who have program management experience. Whereas in the rest of the Department, it's rare that you can get that or have it. I think it needs people who have come up through the system who, in fact, can help manage with broad experience in the field.

Stabilization and reconstruction is an interesting point for us. The more I think about it the more I think it looks more like the kind of thing that AID does, but it has to be expanded has to have a very strong focus on what I would call pre-conflict capacities. They should be going into the field in places that show signs of coming apart and supporting our embassies in dealing with them. It has to have a strong focus with the regional bureaus in pushing them to pay more attention to critical issues coming down the road. It should also have the capability of giving people in the regional bureaus the kind of program support they might need in being able to work in a pre-conflict environment because it isn't pure diplomatic negotiation. It's often the ability to send people to school, to retrain them, to give them new insights into where things are going and to institute programs that might be useful to them and for their country. If you are going to move ahead with countries that are failing states and lack governments capacities, it might well fit with development as closely as it fits with a political focus. It would be interesting to take a harder look at that. I think some would argue -- well it's so different it needs to stand alone and it's so amalgamated with the military that it should be close to them. However, I'm not sure that some of things that AID does wouldn't be as useful for this and sometimes if people can flow back and forth it is helpful. But I also think it should have an interagency staffing base the way in which

they have begun to staff it and it should have the reserve corps and all of the things that have been proposed for it now.

Whether it should be alternatively a stand-alone agency inside State or not is another possibility because it has such heavy programmatic functions. As a result it doesn't easily amalgamate itself into the State bureau structure. That question needs to be looked at.

But those are sort of some thoughts that I've had over a long period of time.

*Q: What role in your experience has Congress played in this breaking up?*

PICKERING: Well it's been maligned. I mean in a sense on the one hand Congress said you really have to pay more attention to international communications. So the first thing they do is they create an assistant secretary for international, I'm just using this as an example, for international communications and you have suddenly a mini bureau pop up which has no or little clout. One of the things I believe is the reasons why the regional assistant secretaries have clout is they have a big span of activities, they deal with -- a big chunk of policy around the world. Secondly, they have a lot of money because they run the embassy system. Thirdly, they are chosen with a great deal more care and they've come up through the system and so they have significantly better managerial capacities. But I think if you created large functional arrangements with very broad set of activities, reasonably aligned, certainly the economic and business bureau has shown that over a period of years, that would help to build clout -- influence on policy. I don't think necessarily only of OES, although my view is that OES should be run by a Foreign Service officer. Of course, I ran it so I'm totally prejudiced in that direction. John Negroponte also ran it. I think we probably did more work in putting it into the foreign policy establishment rather than allowing it to kind of drift off onto the edges and be seen by people as the entrée point of the NGO world into the State Departments. This is okay, I mean I think you can do both, but I think somebody who knows and understands how the Department runs and how the policy process works can be very important. That means understanding how to get policy decisions made which are of critical importance for that bureau, or make them themselves is much more significant, than bringing in an outsider who may have had a well-deserved career as an academic in some feature of the work of the bureau.

*Q: Well I haven't followed it closely but it seems to me a certain amount of the assistant secretary level has been recruited from Congressional staff.*

PICKERING: Of course, congressional staff are featherbedding.

*Q: And they don't bring that much to the table.*

PICKERING: Often they don't or they bring knowledge that H ought to have and not that they necessarily have. I mean to some extent everybody in the Department ought to be part of our Congressional effort. I thought that Dave Abshire when he was assistant secretary for Congressional Relations did a really fantastic job. This was true in part because Dave had enough confidence in himself and in the secretary and enough chutzpah to be able whenever necessary to go around to both the regional and functional bureaus and press into service the

deputy assistant secretaries to work with him on the Hill. So, if he had to make a real push and Dave had to deal with things like the Mansfield Amendment which pulled our troops out of Europe, that approach could work. Dave had no hesitancy in grabbing deputy assistant secretaries and had the secretary's backing to do this and send them up on the Hill for three or four days, but with a very long list of people they should be talking to. Generally speaking people on the Hill don't mind talking to deputy assistant secretary's because they know they are in the middle of the policy process. They have some hesitation, although the H professionals will tell you that it doesn't work that way, in talking to the H professionals. They see them as really flacks for the Department and are prepared to say whatever little can be said without bringing the kind of insights that people who struggle daily with policy are able to give people on the Hill. So I think it is very important to keep our line people close to the Hill rather than to keep them away. Part of the work of the H bureau in the past, through distrust of the Foreign Service and the politicization of the H bureau, has been to try to keep the Foreign Service people away from the Hill rather than to use them effectively with the Hill.

*Q: What about something that seems to be popping up a lot under Hilary Clinton right now and Obama, these special ambassadors which in some ways seem like a good idea but I'm not sure.*

PICKERING: I think the arguments in favor of them now kind of run along the following lines. One is that we have now developed a series of really significant problems that are well beyond the capacity of an assistant secretary, particularly if two or three occur in his or her region, to operate and manage. In the past we know, Chris Hill was a perfect example in the last administration of, in fact, being the assistant secretary for Far East and Pacific affairs but who had to devote a very significant amount of time to the Korean negotiations. He, in fact, made the conscious decision that that would be his priority. I think that was an extremely important thing to do. Chet Crocker on Namibia did the same with great success. On the other hand, it's now clear that you can't with the same degree of control and finesse run a bureau and conduct an extensive negotiation. And then what happens when you have two or three of negotiations in your region? It's important to take a look at that. So over the years I think the Middle East peace process, particularly with Dennis Ross, gravitated away from the NEA bureau although the NEA assistant secretary's did play a role. They were not excluded from the process, they were there and had their own ideas and had them factored in, but they didn't become the primary negotiators. In the past they did when it could be done that way. But I think over time that is the way to relieve the burden. I would prefer that in the cases of separate envoys, they should work and report through the bureaus, just as Ambassadors do. I don't mind what title you give them, but having small separated units dealing with negotiations means that the bureau experience is wasted and that the impression is created that the bureau is no longer good enough to run the policy on the items being negotiated. That is shooting yourself in the foot. The same things happen to Ambassadors in the field if they are excluded or elbowed aside by special negotiators dealing with subjects germane to their country.

This mean that in some cases, if this is the only issue a bureau has to deal with, the bureau becomes emasculated and that's a problem. Afghanistan and Pakistan ought to be back in the bureau. Secondly, if there are several of these issues either inside or outside the bureau but which touch each other, how do we in effect coordinate these people? Is it only the secretary who is

able to do that because of their elevated status or is one of the under secretaries or better yet an assistant secretary going to be given responsibility, or is it going to be totally ignored?

I don't know -- and some of them work both for the president and the secretary. We need to clear up where they get their instructions from and how and in what way they operate so that, in fact, we don't have the NSC going operational on us and totally cut the State Department out of the picture. The line between the NSC and the special negotiator and the special negotiators can't ignore the interagency process. Should they have a role in the interagency process? Should they in fact, be the committee chairmen of the interagency policy and implementation process that deals with their set of issues? Does that cut out the secretary or are they going to be smart enough to keep the secretary on board, on side? We don't know how all those things will work so I think those are a plethora of potential possibilities which we have seen in the past that have presented us with organizational difficulties. My view is they get exaggerated if, in fact, personalities clash and alternatively they get handled very well if personalities are able to talk with each other and work with each other and understand what the equities are on each side.

*Q: Of course what you are saying really is that as problems move up toward the top the personal issue gets more and more important, how people feel?*

PICKERING: No, no I've seen bad leadership and bad personalities at lower levels that can make a lot of waves. But I think that, in effect, the higher up the line you push the problem, the fewer opportunities in between you have to help resolve those problems and it ends up in that limbo somewhere around the secretary. Now a significant number of these problems, because they are so important, are going to have the secretary's daily attention. Then, obviously, the secretary will be a significant part of the process. But we all know the secretary can't be a significant part of every process in the building. The secretary has to delegate and certainly the deputy secretary is one place where a lot of the delegation can take place and where in my view you also have a similar problem, The deputy secretary is an elevated individual, they have interest in certain number of questions, a lot of them aren't interested in dealing with all the questions and so a lot of that falls down on P and E to deal with. That's okay if you've got people in P and E who are prepared to pick up the cudgel. In the past you had people in P and E, from time to time, who were only interested in certain questions and so things got left in limbo. In my view, at least in my approach to P, and I've said this before, was that I had responsibility for everything that the secretary and the deputy were not dealing with, but came up the general political chain. I had enough to do not to go around and try to scarf up other issues that other people were dealing with, but where they were interrelated at least I ought to make my views known either directly or through my staff. But we were too busy to fight over all these issues.

*Q: Did you find as a factor, this is mainly over your entire career, the problem of the foreign Service being a corps and looked, I won't say down upon but, it's been called elite which is a bad word in Washington terms and all. I think Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld exemplified this by his desire to keep the State Department and Arab experts out of his war and things like this. Did you find this the problem?*

PICKERING: Yes, it is a problem and it comes on several different levels. I spoke about it the last time we talked at the level of the secretary, where most secretaries come in with little

knowledge of the State Department and little association with it. I think Secretary Clinton may be an exception to that rule. Many of them come in prejudiced against it from what they have heard and basically what their experience has been. Some are concerned that the Foreign Service will seek to dominate or "run them". They have heard that others have not given the Foreign Service high marks for good personal relations -to some extent that exists. I think that is often where people have come from on the Hill. We have had a long association in the Department with the Hill. If we haven't helped to improve our relationship there, we have missed a golden opportunity and it's our fault. I think that the foreign service tends because of its rigid selection system and the internal competition for jobs and selection out which isn't a huge guillotine process, but nevertheless pushes people on, has grown up having a reputation undeserved in many cases and perhaps unfortunately deserved in others because we have a number of prima donnas and a number of high-flyers. Some of them may tend to think that their own individual success entitles them to certain elevated status which others don't respect. Those kinds of things play a role and I think some of that's our own fault and some of that is reputational risk or difficulties.

But there is a fear, as there was traditionally in the French bureaucracy, which in even rotating governments in the '30s, tended to remain in place. It was thought of somehow that it would be the bureaucracy which would control you if you were a political appointee in high places and you couldn't get out of it. The truth happens to be, I think, somewhat different, but often is overlooked. You have to in government deal with reality and a perception of reality on what the bureaucracy is supposed to give you and works hard to do. In fact, the matrix system in the State Department gives you several opportunities to look at reality from different perspectives and fight it out, which is a lot better than total control of reality in the hands of one bureaucrat or another. It takes a while for incoming secretaries to understand this and some never do -- to understand that the Department is because of its extremely able people, much more inclined both to reflect reality on the one hand and secondly want to work hard for secretaries on the other. They don't want to do it at the expense of becoming ideologues and, I think, the Bush (43) administration had some of that problem. Certainly, the Department went to ground, it didn't go into what I would call active guerrilla warfare to the extent that Secretary Rice wanted a different view and would purvey it. She could have found it in the State Department to the extent that she wanted to enforce departmental discipline and wanted no new or different ideas on policy. So people went to ground. I think that that's more the pattern than the other way around. But it is certainly a problem and certainly foreign service officers have a sense of pride that they've come through a little more difficult process being appointed and they have more difficult jobs and they have to move around more often and all the rest, and that tends to build pride and cohesion and a willingness at times to challenge. But we're not so different; we borrowed our promotion system from the military.

*Q: It's a Navy system; the whole thing came out of World War II.*

PICKERING: Yes that's right, exactly.

*Q: Naval officers put it together.*

PICKERING: Yes, so in effect our staff system George Marshall put in place. He found when he got to State no organized way of supporting the flow of material to the secretary and the deputy and 'unders'. He borrowed from the Army staff system and we built both the line to monitor paper flow and the operations center to track what was going on in the world in real time. So to some extent we've had the advantage of having demanding leadership in tough places -- Henry Kissinger is a perfect example. He came in with many doubts and left at least singing the praises of the foreign service and he was no slouch on beating people up to produce better work.

*Q: Yeah. Maybe we will leave this discussion for the next time but the recruitment and the development of...*

PICKERING: Well I think, let me say a couple things and then we'll talk about budget for a few minutes because we have another ten minutes or so here. I think recruitment in my view has been up and down depending a lot on the international situation, what the economic arrangements have been inside our own country and the role of people in the lead. Colin Powell is a perfect example of those who were role models and people at State were interested in working for somebody like Colin; I think those are going to shift up and down. My own view is that as long as we can have say between ten and fifteen thousand people interested in taking the exam and we are only bringing in 400-500 a year at the most, we have a pretty good base on which to work. I think there have been serious efforts made to diversify and, I think, over the years that has been helpful. I am particularly pleased to be associated with a kind of ROTC program that came as a complete surprise to me but has, I think, begun to produce great, diverse FSOs.

*Q: It's the Pickering Program.*

PICKERING: Yes, and produced good results and I think there is a lot of diversity in that program which I think is extremely important. We've always had problems in recruiting people with economic backgrounds. We've never had the money to recruit scientists and so we need to use these new opportunities that are out there for all kinds of diversity. I think the thing that now exists is that the first President Bush has made a real contribution by making the State Department budget part of the National Security budget. Now somebody has to convince the Congress that there really is a National Security budget and it has national security implications above those that are self-evident in the military. So that's the next stage of this.

As you know, a number of us worked on a report at the American Academy of Diplomacy that took a look at what the Department and AID needed in terms of personnel over the next five years and therefore what the funding ought to be. Well this was particularly devoted to personnel, it had some programmatic ideas in it and so far at least both the last Republican administration and the current Democratic administration seem to be moving along with these ideas. We roughly proposed an increase of 4,700 people over five years at an annualized cost of about \$3 billion extra. So far at least the first 650 or so have already been approved in the 2009 budget and while we don't know all the details of 2010 yet we are hopeful that a similar number or a larger number will be in there. We don't think Congress is going to approve immediately everything that is asked for, but there is a really serious interest in the Congress particularly as a result of what I would call obvious military failure in Iraq to know and understand and use civilian capacities appropriately. There is a strong sense that the military should only be used as

a last resort and that has been a principle and that has now been breached and has failed. Therefore we need to go back and think about having a cleverer, wiser, more capable diplomacy to do some of those jobs that diplomacy was supposed to do in the first place. Our leaders thought somehow if you showed your muscle that you could get it done without worrying about diplomacy and other people and compromises and things like that.

*Q: Well Iraq has been really in a way looking at it professionally has been a plus in certain aspects because it has shown sort of the absolute military way in which is a civilian concept not a military concept. It's not the military's fault its basically the...*

PICKERING: It's not the military's vision that they were going to be used in wars of choice all around the world to solve problems that diplomacy was supposed to have resolved.

*Q: Yeah. Anyway...*

PICKERING: So I think that's helped us, and that's helped with the Congress in terms of the current budget attitude. The election of President Obama and the selection of Secretary Clinton has the possibility to put the Department in a better position. It's going to be a growing problem unless we are able to deal with it. The length of time it's taking to confirm senior officers in the Department and put them in place is creating an inability on the part of the Department to operate effectively. It can't all be done by the secretary alone. I can recall that when I came in and started to work in late April or early May of 1997 for Secretary Albright, the first couple of days they kept calling and saying, "Well, we've had this problem and we don't know what to do with it. I said, "That's fairly easy just let me take care of it." So they breathed this huge sigh of relief and said, "We don't know what to do with all these things that have come up, that isn't what we came here for." I said, "Well that's my job, let it be my job and we'll take them on." They were fairly simple things and you just go back to the regional bureau and ask them to get working on the issue, and if you had worked in the Department for a while it would be clear. You could ask them what are the options, let's get going on this, this is something we can't leave behind, don't bother sending it to the secretary, we'll take care of it here for you. You are the policy voice, tell us where you think it ought to come out and we'll work with you on it.

It was that kind of thing and I think all new administrations get right away into overload. So far the president and Secretary Clinton have been able to parse their way through that, but it's been slow in bringing on the assistant secretary's they need. I've been in touch with Jack Lew occasionally, the new deputy secretary for resources and management, and there is no question at all that he feels by his public statements, overloaded in what he has to do.

So they do need time and I think there is a congenital problem in the State Department about thinking ahead and about planning. So much comes in everyday demanding a response that the process is dominated by the daily flow of business. My own view has been for a long time that we ought to have an officer like Jack Lew who can do basic strategies at a high level, turn those into programs, plans and budgets. We need to have that linked with the entire State Department team including AID so that, in fact, the secretary can present the Congress and the OMB with cohesive budget-that doesn't have all kinds of miscellaneous fingers reaching out for money in miscellaneous ways that aren't part of the central focus on the work of State.

*Q: Is there something or can there be something within the State Department or can you have resources and management. I mean you need money for various things but back to George Kennan's policy planning, where do we go?*

PICKERING: Well I think policy planning is a critical factor. It ought to be part basically of the support mechanism that provides help to Jack Lew as he looks at the fundamental strategies of the State Department in dealing with the problems of the future. That ought to be and I hope it will be Ann Marie Slaughter's job as the State Department policy planner. But I also think that the problem with policy planning has been the inevitable notion that since they are elite and well-chosen both insiders that they know more about today's policy choices than the regional bureaus and they ought to run things. So they get into this problem, if they are not carefully disciplined, that the near term drives out the long term. Then, of course, that's the first Gresham's law of policy failure, because we do little long-term work and because the bureaus have real, current problems. I think the bureaus do need small staffs to complement the policy planning staff to help the assistant secretary by spending some time looking out ahead at what tomorrow and the day after tomorrow's problems will be and how to deal with them.

We had a brief session with Johnny Carson yesterday who is the new assistant secretary for the bureau of African affairs. He certainly is aware of this because he's come from the intelligence community where they've tried to spend their time looking and seeing who is going to be the next Robert Mugabe, who is going to be the next major failed state in Africa and so on. That has to be done. Other things in policy planning that tend to drive policy planning into the more immediate and less far-sighted situation is speech writing. So as they become the secretary's speechwriters, of course, they are interested in what is going to be there tomorrow and what's there on Thursday, rather than looking ahead two, three, four months at the long-term trends. There needs to be a very tight integration between policy planning and the intelligence community. They are a useful source, if they are put to work. The five year looks down the road by the intelligence people are helpful. For too long the intelligence community is "seeing their only mission is to support the war fighter." There's nothing wrong with that, but the real problem is if we don't support the diplomat we end up having to have more war fighter support at a higher level and with greater spending. So I don't think yet we have clearly made the case in our budget, but we are in a position to do it much more thoroughly and much more ably now and I think much more persuasively with some of the things we have talked about.

*Q: All right well this is probably a good place to stoop.*

PICKERING: Well let's break off.

*Q: Next time is there any other fields you would like to cover that you feel...*

PICKERING: I could talk a little bit about the kind of interagency at large as I see it and how that works and how the State Department fits into it so we ought to try and cover that.

*Q: Also, you were there sort of at if not the beginning then its been a developing thing our relationship with non-governmental organizations.*



PICKERING: I think it is good to talk about that and we might want to talk about the wider world of how and of what way these kinds of things fit with where we are and what we ought to be doing about those things. I think that's great, yes.

*Q: All right and also maybe your view of changes in Congress and attitudes.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Because that's...*

PICKERING: Yes that's a great problem.

*Q: Oh God.*

*Q: Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2009 with Tom Pickering. Tom, I'll turn it over to you.*

PICKERING: Okay, we talked last time about whether we should cover the interagency process and maybe NGOs and maybe the Congress perhaps in light of the almost four years that I spent as under secretary.

I would begin on the interagency by saying at that time we were coming out of the period marked by the first administration of President Clinton. I was involved in it only from remote Moscow, so it was hard for me to know a lot, but I had heard and got some sense from my briefings and contacts here in Washington about a number of questions. In fact, I had gone over early and saw Sandy Berger who was then National Security adviser and had been for a while. I was asked to take the job by Madeleine in December and was confirmed in May.

I think sometime before I was actually confirmed I talked to Sandy and I told Sandy that I was very interested and very happy to work and I understood that a significant amount of the work in the deputies committee would fall to me naturally. This in part was because Strobe had wanted to focus on Russia and arms control and India and a number of other questions. We all agreed that we didn't need two people in each of those subjects although since I had been in both India and Russia and had done some arms control I was free to talk to Strobe when he wanted to or when I had something to raise. I was concerned by what I saw was the lack of the ability to use all of the elements of the system, having seen from a number of perches around the world the fact that over time what I call the third level, those committees headed by the assistant secretary's or whatever names they were called or by their opposite numbers at the NSC or jointly by the two of them seemed to have, in effect, been overstepped, if I can put it this way, by the deputies committee. That meant the deputies committee was one of the committees of original jurisdiction to use the legal term and saw these things first without I thought, what should have been coordinated preparation of the interagency by groups led by the assistant secretaries. I had all the benefits because the way paper flowed in so far as we were able to know about upcoming meetings and anticipating those, of what the assistant secretary's thought on these issues. That came to me either by way of their papers, or briefings or both, in dealing with the questions that came up in the NSC structure.

But often questions came up at very short notice and so we were able to get only a couple of paragraphs up to deal with it. A lot of the questions I had dealt with but I thought there would be an enormous value in having the assistant secretary level committees meet a head of time and winnow through the problem; maybe isolate some of the questions and maybe even attempt to give us options to answer the questions rather than in effect making the deputies committee the source of original discussion. Doing it that way required the deputies committee to exchange a lot of information about the background, sometimes to argue about facts, which could have been established ahead of time and then often to argue a whole series of policy recommendations -- many of them came up for the first time at the table! We hadn't had an opportunity to look at those in detail and to adjust the policy approaches or to deal with those or indeed how creatively to put them together.

*Q: Were you finding that your group was in the process of making decisions on things they didn't know much about?*

PICKERING: Well it's always the case at the deputies meeting and worse at the principals meetings. I mean over a period of time very senior offices get briefed in, but you can't expect that they will have the depth of knowledge of someone who has spent their life in a country or years in a country. My sense was we ought to draw on that background and that capacity. To some extent we did if we had sufficient time to provide and get the briefings in the Department, and I suspect my colleagues in Defense and the JCS, Treasury and elsewhere did the same sort of thing. But it would have been in my view, a lot better to have seen the preliminary discussions at the level below ours and some of the conclusions that they drew and some of the ideas they had for policy on a joint basis hammered out in an interagency forum rather than necessarily to come up through only the departmental stovepipe and be joined with others in the interagency for the first time very near the top.

*Q: Something I've seen illusion to in my interviews is that the hotter an issue becomes the more it is likely to attract say top level people to get into it very soon they want a piece of the action. It may almost be an ego process or at least wanting to get their hands on it and the experts get pushed aside.*

PICKERING: I think it's seen from below as that, but as seen from the top as essentially a time driven requirement because it's on the front pages that particularly in the White House and then to some extent at the secretary's level help to drive the consideration of the question. It can't be left in a position where we have all the time in the world to allow the big mill at the bottom to churn out its responses and its papers. So there is an inordinate amount of pressure at the top end of these questions, To some extent the folks down below tend to feel that we've stolen the issue and run away with it in an area of complete or broad ignorance. Part of that is true, we don't always have the benefit of their points of view, which I think is really bad. To some extent we try to operate the system on the basis that as soon as we know that a meeting is coming up or that even we suspect that, then the alerting mechanism in the department got the regional bureaus and the other bureaus to work on the question. But often these were complex questions with lots of ramifications. Sometimes these were merely continuation of prior discussions in which it was certainly important to keep the bureaus filled in. Often the deputies committee meeting you

would have the opportunity to take the assistant secretary and one of the deputy assistant secretary's over. So they had the opportunity to go back and fill in the departments.

One of the problems was that if you met alone in the deputies committee meetings you had almost no time to give a back brief on what had gone on at the meeting. This was true because of the intense pressure you had in your day and the number of things you had to deal with. It was hard to keep the Department informed about what was going on so that they could be ready for the next go-round.

*Q: Could you bring a report or something?*

PICKERING: I usually brought one in the next level down in the Department, an assistant secretary, although they were busy and often it was the deputy assistant secretary who had to carry the load in the regional bureau. But that was very useful because you had their advice. All but one of those in my days was usually a career person with a significant amount of background and residence in the area, highly dependable, lots of smarts and a good sense of policy.

*Q: How driven were these meetings by what was on CNN or the news of the day?*

PICKERING: Oh an awful lot.

*Q: Or in the Washington Post or New York Times?*

PICKERING: An awful lot because when you get to that level of government there is no question at all that foreign policy, security policy and domestic policy all blend and they all blend in particularly because you are never more than four years away from a presidential election and never two years away from an important Congressional election. While in the Department we had made it a practice particularly among Foreign Service officers, to try to, in fact, provide the secretary and the senior levels of the Department with policy recommendations into which they could plug their knowledge of the political questions without trying to anticipate them. Although you and I would know that particularly as it got up to the assistant secretary they put their own Kentucky windage into the policy recommendations because they had a pretty good idea, as most people in the country did, of what the domestic political considerations were on the table. Often they even had a better idea because of their participation in the interagency with the NSC people some of whom were very close to the president and had a very good idea of what was on the president's mind -- on what issues the president wanted to take a risk and on what he didn't want to take a risk and how and in what way that risk should be formulated.

So these are all very interesting questions and to some extent you have this kind of firewall between the Foreign Service and the others, particularly the guys overseas who have to make policy recommendations and have to do it in what is clearly the national interest, but who become highly irrelevant if they don't have some idea of what the domestic debate is. To some extent the farther you are away, the more you are removed from what I would call the insider aspects. Although you get a lot of it in the press and you get a lot of it obviously in a kind of back briefs that come back from meetings. You can see how things are trending one way or another and if it looks a little idiosyncratic then you have to know that there are things at work

that have to do often with the domestic political process. You cannot sell a president on a policy that, in fact, says to the president this is an absolutely splendid and perfect policy and all you're risking is your future political career.

*Q: I saw this first had with one of our icons of the Foreign Service when I served in Belgrade under George Kennan.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: He really didn't have any feel for the American political process.*

PICKERING: Yes, I mean all of us have had to develop some of that and I must say I thought I had a reasonable notion but I learned a lot in the deputies committee. You obviously do about the things that are on people's minds. I felt in some cases one of the other problems with the deputies committee was that it was an NSC intention at the end of meetings that decisions were made or going to be made. In fact we didn't make any decisions in the committee. The National Security advisor, in fact, kind of cogitated about this and often would then call the secretary or the secretary of Defense and say, "It looks like we are heading in this direction are you comfortable?" But at the meeting we would already start talking about what would be the press guidance if we go in this direction. I was very happy to participate in that from the foreign policy perspective and usually that was fairly straightforward. But the domestic political perspectives were fairly arcane and to some extent required a different set of talents and to some extent also put us in the middle of a lot of discussions, which consumed a lot of time in which we were not necessarily the most competent authorities.

*Q: Did you find that the State Department, the NSC, generally during your period worked together?*

PICKERING: I think we worked together pretty well. I thought about one thing that I had seen in the past, I was back in the Nixon days the deputy director of the bureau of political-military affairs and there was not a question that Henry, Bill Rogers and Mel Laird all had very serious differences in some turf and in where things should go. That was not pleasant. The bureau of political-military affairs had a very close relationship with the Defense Department and was very much involved in this; there was no way for us to avoid it.

To some extent we also became part of the contention and in that regard maybe part of the problem. But to some extent it was to not have the State Department so completely overwhelmed in critical decision-making even on strategic issues that had huge foreign policy implications, that we felt in those days we really had to fight to keep our place in the scheme of things. That was, in a way, highly contentious -- more bitterly contentious than any I have seen since that I have been directly involved in. So it was nice to come back to the State Department under different circumstances. I was out of the Department in those terms in the interagency terms from 1981-1996, almost sixteen years and to come back in and to find a collegiality or a potential for collegiality was much more comfortable. Occasionally, you would have a little bit of friendly sniping between Defense and State over at the meetings, but nothing that was terribly deeply serious, It was a good way to send a signal that certain policies were not from the perception of

others very wise. There was a certain sense from the Defense Department occasionally that we were not he-man enough on the issues and there was a certain feeling on our side there was not enough sophistication at the Defense Department; but it wasn't over whelming and actually my opposite number then was Walt Slocum who anything but unsophisticated and obviously very clearly deeply intelligent and wise about issues. He brought to the Defense Department perspective a lot of interesting points so it was not in the long run difficult, in fact, to see where we could find a way to help through our contributions at the meeting to put these things together

*Q: Right now I am interviewing Beth Jones, she was assistant secretary for European Affairs under Colin Powell, and basically she just succeeded that administration.*

PICKERING: Right after the second Clinton administration.

*Q: She talks about the NSC under Condoleezza Rice as being a very ineffective organization and not much leadership. What about Sandy Berger? How was he?*

PICKERING: Well Sandy Berger provided real leadership. There was no question at all that he clearly felt that it was his job to pull things together and it was his job to suggest ways to do it. There was no question at all because I frequently was in the secretary's office when she would take a call from Sandy. So Sandy was pretty constantly on the phone. I suspect it was as much with Madeleine as he was with Bill Cohen, the secretary of Defense although I don't know that for sure. I think it was a close relationship in which each side felt the need for talking was very important and each side felt that if they weren't talking they could stumble or they could get into a problem or they could get into a hole. So that, I think, was very, very important in keeping the coordination right at the top.

I think at my level I had, for example, a weekly breakfast with Jim Steinberg when we could both make it, but it was more times on than off. It was over at the White House with an opportunity to talk over issues that were over the horizon. I found this very useful. I had a chance to raise questions with Jim in terms of their thinking and where things were going. He often used that as an opportunity to have a sounding board with me as to where kind of we in State thought things ought to go on a set of issues. It was a good institutionalized arrangement to be able to say look we are caught up in the daily stuff where are we going in the future.

There were other aspects I think I've talked at length about the Plan Columbia exercise, which essentially came out of Sandy's interest in trying to find an interagency answer to a particular problem. I think the idea of creating what was essentially a task force of interagency folks led by someone in one of the major departments was an interesting approach, but it worked out well. State had a preeminent interest in the question and the others were basically so tired of having this issue come up and then not be resolved or fractioned in the process, that I think they were willing to come along. I think more of that would make sense. I think that since I've talked to Bob Gelbard who was then running the Balkans...

*Q: This was Robert Gelbard?*

PICKERING: Yes and Bob was running the Balkans and did much the same sort of thing, I think, in dealing with Kosovo at that stage but also earlier with Bosnia. They had a very strong interagency task force effort which the NSC was obviously centrally a part of although in many ways they looked to me on Colombia and the team and I looked to the assistant secretary and western hemisphere affairs and to the assistant secretary in the bureau of international narcotics and law enforcement to be my two primary kind of policy guys on this question. But we picked up on the issue and then pushed it forward. We didn't need a lot of meetings over at the White House, we had them here. But we had Justice and AID and we had Defense in all its various ramifications, the Joint Chiefs, the Defense folks who dealt with special operations. We had the now called combatant commander, then the regional commander of South Com, all were represented at the table and it was important that they be and in some ways it was very helpful to get that whole process moved ahead. It was an interesting task force in some ways because almost immediately when we got talking to the Colombians, it constituted another aspect of this which was a joint Colombian and U.S. task force which did a lot of the work in preparation of the implementation. It turned out to be a very good arrangement.

*Q: I've been interviewing Ted McNamara who was earlier on in the early '90s as ambassador to Columbia. But he was saying at the time he was there the United States essentially was denying that this was an American problem in that we were the consumer. By this time was this a factor?*

PICKERING: What had happened and this was very interesting. I came in in May of '97 and I think by the end of '97 or '98, I would have to look at the record, Jim Dobbins who was covering western hemisphere affairs in the NSC and Jim was never one to let any grass grow under his feet, called me on several occasions and said, "We've got a real problem in Colombia." I said, "I know we have a real problem in Colombia, what are we going to do about it?" He said, "Would you take on doing this?" I said, "Jim, I've got so much stuff to do there's got to be a better way." We kind of let it languish. Part of that was my fault and part of that was the fault of the bureaucracy and part of that was the tense competition for time and energy for other things that were always conceived to be of higher priority. Some sense out of ignorance that maybe the Colombians ought to do more themselves and take care of this problem and let it go away.

Well it was then by the middle of '99 that Sandy called and said, "We can't let this go any more, we have to pick it up." That's when I think it got picked up. Then, of course, we had a political problem because on the Hill they wanted no more Vietnams, they didn't want us to do counter terrorism, but in effect the answer to the problem was a complex answer with many interwoven strands. We had a tendency then to put the drugs piece forward because we thought it had greater salience in the U.S. On the other hand, we provided no military assistance to units that were not vetted so we went ahead with the Colombians and vetted two battalions eventually.

*Q: Okay, we'll pick this up while you were undersecretary and we will pick this up as we haven't touched NGOs...*

PICKERING: Or Congress.

*Q: ...or Congress and we will pick those subjects up. Okie dokie.*

*Q: Okay, today is the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2009 with Tom Pickering. Tom, one of the newest, well not newest, for us NGOs (non-governmental organizations) was sort of a foster child we treated with great care. These were people with one purpose in mind and I think as Foreign Service officers we viewed them as we used to view the press as not necessarily your friend. By the time you were undersecretary I mean they became an integral part of our whole overseas apparatus, wouldn't you say?*

PICKERING: Well not a part of our apparatus so much as part of the scene.

*Q: Scene yes.*

PICKERING: I think you have to distinguish between that and the apparatus although there were plenty of places where a lot of people suspected that the functional bureaus in the State Department for good or ill had suddenly become prisoners or at least highly responsive to their in NGO community. That very close interrelationship and made the regional bureaus distrustful in some ways.

*Q: How would this manifest itself?*

PICKERING: I think you have to first understand the theory of the case and then you and see how it manifested itself. The bulk, but not all NGOs, are by definition almost single-issue organizations. They take an issue on because of their deep sense of concern about a particular question, whether it is human rights broadly or a special set of circumstances as having to do with things like HIV aids. Those are examples. All of which I think are very good, all of which grow out of the spirit of volunteerism in the United States and all of which represents how in effective democracies, organizations to promote causes and ideas can play a useful role and have a suitable place.

The difficulty is that in foreign relations with many countries around the world our relationships are not easily defined in single-issue terms. It is not possible to take one example to run our relationship in China -- solely on the basis of concerns about proliferation for example, as significant as that might be -- or solely on the basis of concerns about human rights as important as that is. The regional bureaus whose responsibilities are to develop our relationships with China, the bureau of East Asian Pacific affairs, is in a way in a structural sense in a clash with the human rights bureau in the State Department backed up by its NGO supporters and indeed its NGO lobbyists. That has to be worked out in terms of how to deal with human rights in a panoply of issues with China. There are several theories in the case. The NGO theory has often been, not exclusively, that tremendous pressure on China will bring them around on human rights. That one needs as a result to bring that pressure on all fronts, including trade fronts, including military relationships, including maybe even talks maybe even contacts, Sooner or later China may even recognize the importance of the relationship with the United States and behave itself much more cooperatively on human rights issues. These are the issues which are a primary concern to these organizations; all of which is entirely legitimate. I am not complaining here that people are acting outside what one would call the bounds of accepted procedure.

On the other side interestingly enough, many who have dealt with it take the Chinese case one step further. With China, over the years, we have found that you get further in a complex relationship with China by setting up a set of cooperative as well as punitive aspects to the relationship. That the more that China and the United States are invested in areas of mutual interest, the more they can speak to each other with effectiveness in areas where there is no mutual or little mutual interest. To some extent it is the investment in what I want, as opposed to what you want, that makes a difference in the kind of relationship that can evolve. The strategy in the relationship is to keep the balance of positives running ahead of the balance of negatives so that the Chinese investment in the American relationship and its hope in future positive aspects of the relationship are large and in many areas can thus help to motivate Chinese willingness listen to the United States on areas where it has concerns. China has the same interest; it has a tendency to believe that the U.S.-Chinese relationship is solely determined by the United States on the U.S. side, which is, of course, farthest from the case. So we have a complex set of relationships and in that sense the single issue problem of the NGO runs in a kind of philosophical and doctrinal way against managing the complex set of relationships. We have many actors who play a role in shaping our interests and policies and NGOs are part of that process.

You have to find a way in this complex relationship to do two things simultaneously. One is to use the matrixed nature of the State Department, the functional bureaus representing their interest and the regional bureaus representing the country interest, to find ways to harmonize policies. To some extent this harmony takes place because the functional bureau represents what one would call the relationship around the case in a way that is coherent and consistent and would fight against special breaks in that relationship or special changes in that relationship to meet country needs. The regional bureau is much more interested in how that relationship can be managed in the complex web of relationships with the country as a whole. It will often seek diversions from the international standard, if you can put it that way, on things like human rights that are upheld by the functional bureau. So for example, the Indian civil nuclear deal under the Bush administration was a perfect example of how that complex set of activities run. The non-proliferation experts didn't like it because it deviated from the standard we had worked very hard over the years to achieve internationally. The Indian country experts who managed this said we have to make these concessions to the Indians in order in the longer term to get the Indians, from our perspective, both in a better position with us strategically, but also over the longer term bring them into the non-proliferation agreement regime. But we will have to use as standard something different than what we would in a similar set of relationships have normally admitted.

It is this kind of set of relationships that you get to observe first hand in many jobs in the State Department. If you understand something of what I would call the theory of the case, the background, how in fact, these relationships work and what drives them, then you can understand the complex set of relationships we have to deal with. Of course, the functional bureaus and the regional bureaus also have to find a way to understand both the broader complexities of country relationships on the one hand and the importance to the United States of having a consistent and unified national policy across the board on human rights or non-proliferation on the other. People around the globe will not trust the United States if it begins to make concessions all over the place in its policy in order to achieve other or even similar



objectives, backing off human rights for non-proliferation steps forward. This is why it's important for people to understand that the State Department has to be matrixed. It cannot basically run the world on the basis of five or ten or twenty divergent foreign policies on non-proliferation and that what you can do for China you won't do for Guatemala -- that kind of thing.

*Q: Much of what you are saying strikes me that if one wants to look at a perfect illustration go back to the Carter administration and Pat Derian running loose on human rights for the first time not chopping off on telegrams and instructions unless the human rights factor is taken in, brought the battle sort of to the fore.*

PICKERING: This is just one example, but I watched it happen in non-proliferation. You can watch it happen in narcotics, you can watch it happen in all of the areas. I watched it in OES when we had differing views about how things should be dealt with. OES dealt heavily with non-proliferation, but it also, of course, treated with all kinds of science areas. So it's built into the nature of our foreign policy and therefore, in my view, has to be built into the State Department.

Now my own feeling is that if you look at this structurally and organizationally it is a serious mistake to create, often at Congressional behest, a whole series of smaller functional bureaus each led by an assistant secretary which have a very narrow domain. In part that breeds the notion of what I would call jihadism in favor of a particular policy overwhelming what it is we have to put together to deal with countries and regions around the world -- but mainly countries. Secondly, with a larger number of issues in a functional bureau and the wider its scope, the more it comes to understand the nature of the conflicts that exist between different approaches of the United States. That it applies not just the countries and differences between country and functional questions, but different approaches to various functional questions across the board. And, I think the larger the bureau is and the more complex its relationships are, if the assistant secretary, she or he is a strong person, the greater the capacity to influence policy and in the end strike the right balance. The result is that stronger that functional assistant secretary becomes in their ability to speak in policy councils in favor of the kinds of approaches they want to take. But even more importantly, the more capable they and the regional assistant secretaries are of working out the kind of essential compromises that have to be at the basis of an effective American policy. So it's a very complex area. It is not one people outside State normally intrinsically understand. To some extent you have to be in the system and see how it works to see how this aspect of it plays out.

*Q: Well did you find as undersecretary you would sometimes have to knock heads together between a regional and a specialty bureau?*

PICKERING: Often, I mean in part that was one of the key tests. If I weren't doing it or my colleagues as under secretaries weren't doing it, then it got pushed up to either the deputy or the secretary, and it was not basically our job to push stuff up. It was our job to keep our ears open for what it was and our eyes open to what the secretary wanted to deal with and felt she'd had to deal with or Strobe felt he had to deal with and make sure that they were not in any way eclipsed from dealing with those issues by having their calendars clogged with different questions. Under secretaries should pick up the rest of the questions and then to decide among those whether there

were questions of such significance that we had to have a secretarial backing to deal with these. That could occur either in the interagency process or on the basis of the fact that we had touched base at a high enough level to assure a particularly difficult controversial or problematic decision got supported. It was often necessary, as under secretary, to look at these pieces and see from the basis of your own experience how the effective interest of the U.S. was going to be promoted by the kind of arrangement of policy you had to make. Often you had to go back to both sides and say, in effect, I think you guys can move here or what's wrong with moving in this direction -- suggest policy alternatives or to get your staff working with you to vet those around.

Part of the job of being under secretary was, in fact, both to deal with those questions and often to try to push the players if they were not being innovative as to how to be innovative. Of course, the interesting part there was you had to ask questions because every foreign policy issue, as I see it, is bounded by a certain set of assumptions about parameters. You can move here or you can't move here. The really interesting question is to test those and see whether, in fact, your assumptions hold water. Often you find that those that people are most convinced are unmovable, can with a little work be shifted to find the answer. In Libya, accepting to try Libyan intelligence officers in a Scottish court in Holland would not have been seen as a readily easy step to take. It wasn't, but it helped. That means asking whether it is sustainable that foreign country X won't go here or you can't move in this direction because it will undermine the continuity and strength of U.S. commitment to a particular foreign policy. Often you can find ways to move and explanations for ways to move that will help people understand how changes are really consistent with where you are going, rather than contrary to where you are going. That is another interesting piece. You have to have a strong sense of fundamental objectives first. Then take a look at whether and, if so, how a policy approach strengthens your ability to achieve those objectives. Often the explanation is chess not checkers -- that is you have to think a number of moves ahead to try to determine whether that approach is helpful or not. That gets complicated, because the other side is also an actor. I strongly feel working in these issues closely with the US ambassador and the embassy helps.

Another part of the problem is, of course, there are other ways to bound the problem. One way to do that is to say suppose we have a problem with country X. Then it's a very difficult problem for them to solve and for us to solve. But suppose we find a way to link it with a solution of another problem. We have a greater interest in Y problem, they have a greater interest in X problem; if we can arrange a trade off between X and Y to get, in fact, a package that they can deal with, that's sometimes helps.

Another way to deal with the problem is to cut it into smaller pieces. It was fascinating one of the first things that I had to deal with was the comprehensive test ban when I started in my second year in the Department working in what later became the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. It was very interesting because Jim Goodby who is one of the finest of our arms controllers and one of the great thinkers and still continues to work there, came up very early on with an idea. If we cannot get a comprehensive test ban treaty with the Soviets for all kinds of reasons, that they aren't ready yet to stop testing, but the real problem with testing is, in fact, its pollution of the atmosphere and the oceans. Why not stop testing everywhere but underground where we can contain releases within a very high degree success? We could then try that as a first step. Of course, worked very well because it met what were then the salient needs on both

sides. The community in the United States that didn't trust the Soviets and didn't believe, in fact, that we could stop testing right away and that we had other big problems to solve in the test area was satisfied with underground testing in the main agreed reluctantly that a ban on all but underground tests would be a step forward. That worked too with the Soviets and it was a remarkable opportunity to see that happen from the inside.

So you have all of these what I would call tricks of the policy trade or ways of proceeding in the policy trade that are, very, very important and this is what really strong and useful and thoughtful people in the Department do when you are faced with a big problem.

*Q: Yeah. One of the problems I've seen just observing the State Department and other things there is a tendency for most people to be straight line thinkers. In other words, China will never do this or the Berlin wall will never come down. People were saying that into October...*

PICKERING: This is exactly what I mean about testing the assumptions. To the extent you can test the assumptions and can work out a new way of proceeding which you explain to the other side it can become a win-win. There are a lot of things that make up effective diplomacy, but one thing is your ability to sit and listen to the other side. To try and figure out what are the motivating factors in their position, which of the assumptions are the ones they may be able to move on and which of the assumptions about their position are going to be very hard for them to move. Some of that is in their own political context or for a whole series of other reasons having to do with historical development of their position or for similar reasons. To try those out to see where you can go, to see what kind of movement you can get is part of the way forward. So the idea is not always to adjust your own position, but to find ways to adjust both positions to meet the needs for forward progress. Listening helps you to understand what they are saying. But deeper than that is the problem if figuring out what they actually mean? Until you ask questions, that doesn't really start. Sometimes they don't know the answers to begin with any more than you do. Sometimes the answer will help you because it will open a door you can exploit to find the win-win. That allows for quid pro quo exchanges which is always more saleable to people in Washington. Listening is an art form in part. Often the other side will repeat old talking points indefinitely to defend a point of view. The trick is to seek out what their objective really is. Sometimes they know this well and don't want to open up on it. Sometimes they can help define or redefine it in ways that can be useful in finding a solution. Sometimes an exploration of this issue can help define in clearer ways what the real objectives are or should be.

That is part of good diplomatic give and take. In the Cold War, distrust and ideology made that very hard to do in the early years. Over time trust was built. Walks in the woods talks could help understand problems and even lead to solutions. It was useful that both sides knew that a major imperative was to avoid an active use of nuclear weapons in a conflict between them. That simple understanding was reinforced by the Cuban missile crisis. As trust developed more progress could be achieved. It was fundamentally true that diplomacy then played the major role in building strategic security and stability. We had no other choice. There was no military answer except to maintain a persuasive deterrent force, but never, never become beguiled by the notion that a use of that force except under the most stringent conditions of defense under attack would be useful or justified.

In some ways over the last decade we forgot those lessons -- that diplomacy really could play a major role in national security. There grew up a sense of distrust of diplomacy. It was seen as slow and often ineffective. Diplomacy suffers from a caricature of diplomats as effete party goers. It fails to appreciate the lengthy and serious work done in diplomacy to settle issues and build trust. Henry Kissinger brought about some resurgence of interest in diplomacy as did George Shultz in our diplomacy and its effective use. The post-war period has challenged us to find new ways to use diplomacy to deal with problems.

In the meantime, we slid into a view that military victories were the new and simple way to build solutions. We forgot about the complexities of the problems of state building, the weaknesses of local leadership, the myriad problems of development and that in the end diplomacy in its various and ramified forms, including development, would have to be used to address those issues. Conventional combat success didn't necessarily make that easier with the development of asymmetrical warfare.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that particularly China is becoming the major relationship as we look at things today obviously with exceptions? But, the fact that so many of the Chinese cadre, the rulers, are sending their kids to school in the United States this has to have a long term effect. It's a globalization of the education.*

PICKERING: I think it's even more than that. One of the things that happened to me was that in '79, in the Carter administration, when I was assistant secretary in OES, I was asked to join Mike Oxenberg and two or three others -- this was entirely new to me -- to sit down with the Chinese and work out an educational exchange arrangement. Since the Chinese wanted it largely in science and since I was running the bureau of Oceans and Science and Environment at the State Department, I was the logical person to do this. Well, I'd had enough relationship with the science community to understand the importance of this and enough relationship in understanding in the Defense Department to understand their concerns, but also to get a very strong sense about the Chinese -- Deng Xiaoping's interest -- in trying to find a way to build in effect Chinese technical and scientific capacity to meet the needs which he saw obviously as coming challenges to China in this area. I had some small contact with the Chinese.

So we did in the end have maybe ten thousand Chinese a year coming to the United States. Of course, we were interested in Chinese language, history, culture and art and we had a hundred people going to China. We had few Chinese speakers and the Chinese wanted us out of political issues and had a broad view of those. So it was a force for a rapid change with so many Chinese coming to the US. You could say this really didn't work out very well for us sending people to China. They had to spend much time training their people to learn English so that they could come and meet our requirements that it did not get going as fast as they wished. They did get back a lot of well-trained scientific and technical people.

So, in effect, the answer to your question was even more than the children of the leadership coming to the United States to study, there was a whole generation of Chinese chosen basically by the Chinese system by whatever merit standards they had, but they were generally very good.

*Q: So who were the Mandarin selections?*

PICKERING: They came because China said this is a national priority and in those days if they slipped in a few kids of the elite that was just a small number and a deflection basically from perfection rather than the major piece. Of course, you had then and you still have generations of Chinese coming to the United States who played a huge role in the Chinese system. They understood our role in science, they understood where we were going and they understood what we had to offer in those areas. But they also understood something about the way our system worked. In my view while they may have had some skepticism about some elements of it, they also had the beginnings of some deep concern about the fact that totally authoritarian systems were not necessarily going to be the final answer. Of course, as China began to shift into a much more open economy we saw energy go into that direction. Some of the combination of what they learned in science and technology, engineering and mathematics in this country began to play a role outside the government sector as well as in the inside sector in terms of helping them improve and perfect their economy. There are a lot of reasons for that. Of course, we were not the only place they went. They went to Europe; they went elsewhere where they could find high quality cooperative arrangements for them to build their basic underpinning of science and engineering.

*Q: Sometimes I think we in the State Department forget that we really are a revolutionary society. We started out that way and we still, I think, we learn on our mother's milk to preach certain things and all, I mean Americans just do. Sometimes it gets us into trouble but it's an infectious society.*

PICKERING: Well I think it's right. The big challenge in the State Department and part of our society is obviously first to attract and then to reward and promote people who are prepared to challenge the system -- not in ways to seek to destroy the system, so much as to challenge the system to produce better sets of answers to the foreign policy issues. To me this is the most important aspect. I think a lot of us enjoyed doing this the most and while it was always a pain and a challenge to have to sit inside the system and face the arguments of people who were against change for one reason or another, it was also educational and even productive. Some of those came out of the kind of single-issue NGO community views and sometimes out of the functional bureaus, but often out of the regional bureaus. They would say we can't do that because it will never be an accepted kind of thing. I felt that from the very beginning that one of the problems with my colleagues was that they spent 85 percent of their time trying to say no. To some extent this was conservative, this was guarding against failure, this was guarding against proposing stuff that somewhere along the line might look hokey or crazy or backfire. On the other hand, it didn't solve problems very well and it tended drive toward that idea that the US become a bulldozer -- that type solution would work.

Well for a long period in the Cold War, as we led the rest of the world, part of the bulldozer solution worked. We are the Americans, we've been through this, we know best this is the way you have to go. So we got a lot of other people to take up a lot of the pain and the strain. I don't think that is happening as much anymore and now are in a position that we have to listen more-- We have to find a way to be more flexible in our leadership. We have to find a way, in fact, to use diplomatic skills to bring people along with answers to the problems that sometimes they don't particularly like. On the other hand sometimes the tricks of the trade are to convince people

that the ideal solution was really their solution not yours; or to put the two together in a way that makes the consultative process have them build buy-in to the answers to the problem from their side. There are important ways to do that. Consultation, not just a rote dance step, but to really listen can help. Over the years, the UK has really specialized in helping us think through answers to significant questions. It has been a good friend, but most of all when we needed new ideas and ‘emperor’s new clothes’ kind of thinking.

One of the most interesting things I found in a very few posts, but in an occasional post, you would find your opposite number, an ambassador, often a very senior person in the foreign ministry, who was dealing with your sets of problems who would be willing to sit down with you off-line and talk about a particular problem. They would tell you what they thought would be doable, the areas of flexibility and possibility; then you could feel out what you thought would be the areas for a joint solution. Out of that kind of a conversation obviously each side was still holding some cards in reserve as you went down the road. You could begin to see a path through the situation and it was particularly useful to me in a place like Russia or India or the UN to have that kind of an opposite number who was deeply involved with the whole panoply of U.S. relationships and had been for a long period of time and was obviously able to work all levels

*Q: This is something you’ve learned over your time. Do you get any feel that is there a way of feeling out alphas and betas within the Foreign Service who can do this or to train everybody to be an alpha or not?*

PICKERING: I think it’s a combination. I think it’s clear that where we are now is that we lack the kind of systematic formal training that for example our colleagues in the military have. I think there are good reasons why. It’s not just parsimony on the part of the Congress. Some of it has been our reluctance to push that particular element too, because having pushed that piece frequently and gotten a negative response, we are unaware of the fact that we could actually get things changed when over a period of time we can. I think it is also true and this is a very broad brush theory of the case, that if we constantly look at our military people as the ideal we are looking at a sets of structures and a set of arrangements which are quite different. If you look at the military, and I spent three and a half years in the military and spent a lot of time in military training, which I found was very good, it was essentially what we would call skills and craft training as much as it was academic, theoretical training. It was not innovative so much as it was ‘indoctrinative’. If you had to learn in four months all of the essential things about ships that you had to learn in four years in Annapolis, then you threw away a lot of frills and history and you just went for the basic material -- so that you could learn something about gunnery, something about operations and so on. But compared to the military, if you look at it if the civilian side of the government, particularly diplomacy, it is doing its job while the bulk of the military responsibilities are preparing for the next conflict. That means education and training. Sure they do things like military assistance, counter terrorism operations at a low level, civilian evacuations and keeping themselves strong and indeed significant so that our diplomacy is backed up by a capacity to act militarily, if in fact diplomacy doesn’t succeed.

That means that for combat units they have all the time in the world for training, what else do they do?

*Q: Right now we are involved in two wars but these were always...*

PICKERING: Well that is why we are strained because being involved in two wars we need three units for every job, three brigades for one forward, one being refitted and one in the final stages of training for replacing the one that is forward. So two-thirds of the military in combat situations at least in ideal circumstances is involved deeply in training and three-thirds when we are not in that, if we can put it that way.

Look at the Foreign Service. If you put it this way, it is in combat, we are in operational mode 100 percent of the time and more than eight hours a day five days a week and a lot more. So, in effect, the time out for training has to come through extra positions which are allocated so that we can maintain our operational capacities without drawing them down. That allows us to still have people in the pipeline who can do the training and do so on a basis of the fact that we are not pulling people out of the frontlines of consular work or the frontlines of reporting or the frontlines of development or whatever you want to call it. So we have to have a different posture on this and we haven't been good at conveying that notion very well. We haven't been good at figuring out how to get the Congress to fund it. As a result, over a period of time in some areas at least, we have let our training become more happenstance and even pedestrian because it hasn't demanded the highest attention and indeed the highest funding support.

We need to have roughly a fifteen percent overhead in funds and slots for training. We ought to work out a notion that every officer every five years ought to have either six months or more of some kind of training. We need step wise training to move through the process. One set of training builds towards the next. But we need this combination of what I would call acquiring new data which is the traditional military type of training or new skills or new activities on the one hand. On the other we should be developing courses and thought and ideas about how we can do our job better both in theoretical terms and in analytical terms. You can't teach innovation very easily, but you can teach a lot about innovation in foreign policy. You can't teach experience, but you can go back and pick five or six reasonably interesting case studies and run people through those as to how things could have been changed in different stages as you move the possibilities. Can we train or reach people how to do things better in diplomacy? Well the bulk right now of what we all went through in our careers is what let's say 75 percent on the job training and 25 percent formal training. To some extent the on the job training is immensely valuable, but to do that well why isn't one of the first courses you teach how to organize, prepare and get the most of on the job training? What do we know about on the job training? Mentoring is part of that. Perhaps on line courses could also fill in.

It seems to me there are all kinds of interesting possibilities here that we should find a way to push forward, to get our people to have the advantage of this as we move ahead. Some have suggested well a degree isn't required, but maybe a degree ought to be required for entry. Stephanie Kenney has come forward with a very interesting idea of why don't we have in the first five years a requirement to go stepwise in what would be a MS or MA level course and degree inside the service. The first half year, the typical A-100, would be the first semester of study in a master of diplomatic science degree. We could associate ourselves with the Washington University system that can offer those degrees and then have a full second semester

or maybe a year in the first five years where you go and finish up and you get the more academic courses and you get a chance to write as well as take the craft and trade training that you get in the A-100 and even more. A lot of what you could put into this is what do you need to start out and then what do you need in the first five years to be a successful Foreign Service officer. The degree comes for free with successful completion and it's a requirement.

*Q: Well actually what we are doing right here Tom I feel at some point should be a major part of the education of Foreign Service officers because the going into this immense collection of the experiences of Foreign Service people...*

PICKERING: I couldn't agree with you more.

*Q: ...and to instill it and too get it. That hasn't happened yet. I hate looking for ways of doing this but...*

PICKERING: Well one of the things you could do and you might think about suggesting it is look we now have what 1600 of these oral histories; they are full of lessons learned. Why not find a way, including both Foreign Service officers and maybe some academics on contract, to spend a full two years reviewing this material and distilling out of it all kinds of things. What are the key lessons learned? What are the areas where additional education would have been helpful at an earlier stage? What kinds of things do these identify that help us understand where change is going to go for the future? A whole series of questions like that that would be then the basis of what one would call an evolving new curriculum that would take, for example, the success we had what was it twenty years ago in designing an eight month course for economic officers that took them up to the masters level in economics. We knew we had weakness in economic backgrounds and in reporting and indeed economic analysis and understanding. If you can do that kind of thing and it has a direct relationship to our capacity, can you do that kind of thing in other courses that are related? Why not do a few select advanced oral histories in effect with officers at the five and ten-year level now to see what is working and what is not working for them and their colleagues? How many courses do we teach that help people understand political analysis? We can teach about the region and the country and what is going on there, but I don't know how much we can learn or understand about what constitutes good political analysis and how to be successful at it and how it best fits in with the needs of the government? So these are all remarkably important kinds of things. To some extent you've provided a huge amount of material but we haven't gotten on top of it yet.

*Q: I get humbled all the time. My last overseas assignment was consul general in Naples and when I arrived I didn't know how to consul general. I mean I really didn't know what was expected of me, nobody talked to me and I was just sort of fumbling. I feel that I didn't do as good a job as I could've. Luckily I had a bad earthquake and I knew what to do in a bad earthquake; I was counselor officer. But without that extra little help from God it wouldn't have happened. But the point being that we are thrown into these things and we should have something better.*

PICKERING: I was the same as you. I went to Jordan, as ambassador and I had no course in being an ambassador. They had no course in those days. They have one now for two weeks and I



think it is barely adequate. It's mainly for people who haven't been in the Foreign Service to teach them a little bit about what the Foreign Service people absorbed, but I took it on my way to India and I learned a lot. I also learned that I had some lessons in the Navy. The Navy even back in the 1950s was doing leadership training for junior officers. We didn't call it leadership training, we didn't know that it was, but in fact they did. One of the things that I found useful and tried to apply ever since was that I learned in the Navy that the captain was expected to inspect the ship personally daily. He couldn't do the whole aircraft carrier but he did pieces of it and other people did the rest. For small ships, there was a daily routine; no one could understand what was going on, know where the problems were and then talk to his men and get around without this process. So I tried to do this quarterly in the embassy. I took the admin counselor and the DCM and we started on the top floor and we looked at everything. Finding piles of things like old newspapers, I said what's this? Why is it here? What are we doing with it? Why is it gathering dust? Why, if we are not using it get rid of it? Everything from that to walking around in the sections and seeing what people were doing and what are you working on today and that kind of think just to make sure, in fact, that I had appeared once in a while, but also that I was interested in their work and their working spaces. I said what are your problems? It looks like you don't have any air flow in here or the lights are terrible or what's wrong? I guess it was what I would call just to check the physical conditions. I thought it was remarkably valuable. In big embassies I couldn't see the whole place so I said let's do this building or that building. Let's see what's going on here.

*Q: Well I worked for a year with one of the icons of the Foreign Service George Kennan as chief of the consular section. He was on, I think, the fourth floor of the embassy building; I was in essentially the basement. He never came down to the consular section in those four years. I got him down once for our Christmas party and that took real effort.*

PICKERING: Where was this in Moscow?

*Q: In Belgrade. I mean this was typical.*

PICKERING: These guys were interested, of course, in what was going to happen next in the Soviet Union.

*Q: No yeah sure.*

PICKERING: That took a whole lot of my time.

*Q: But I mean there are a lot of tricks of the trade and maybe things I hope are getting better.*

PICKERING: One hopes so and I mean there are things like that. There are things like I found as I got to Moscow, something I had used rarely but beneficially, town meetings were very valuable. The Moscow Embassy was still subject to rumors, still a fairly closed society and people got bad ideas about what was going on. You needed opportunities to have them vent or you need opportunities to tell them that you were there to correct mistakes when they were made. We had very few Russians, but we began to have the local Russian staff in, which shocked everybody in the embassy who had come out of the old tradition. But I said, "No, this is a

different world.” But I learned one thing that is to have them in sooner rather than later. Secondly, I could depend on my wife and the DCMs wife to know what was going on much more than I would. People would bring issues to them that they wouldn’t bring to us because we don’t want to bother the ambassador or we’re afraid he might be retributive or that kind of thing. But they would suddenly identify something and I’d say yes that seems to be a problem let’s get on it.

I would never have a town meeting without being there because you don’t want to turn over leadership, you want people to know what you are doing. I would also use town meetings to do a couple things. One was if people had a real concern and I knew what to do about it then I would say okay here is what we are going to do. We are going to do this, this and this -- and assign people to do the task right there, if I was confident I knew where to go. Otherwise I’d say look this is a difficult problem here is the other side of the issue. I’m going to ask the DCM or I’m going to ask the admin counselor, I’m going to ask somebody to come back in two weeks and report to me with recommendations and we will then tell you what we have decided. The fact that they knew we had traction in this rather than the fact that they were just there to vent was important. Some people would say dumb things that they later regretted, but it was open and it was not a session in which people would be retaliated against. I made it very clear I wanted to hear what was going on and that what was a concern to them was a concern to me. That is one way you have as an ambassador to connect. Moscow was a fairly big post but it wasn’t so huge that you couldn’t do that. But I found it was very useful and I always used to do that when I arrived at a post. Within a day I would say let’s have a town meeting. We bring everybody in, we have an opportunity to sit together, get to know each other and talk. I would say, “Look, here’s who I am, this is how I look at this post, here’s where the president wants us to go, this is the kind of thing we are doing. I am interested in team efforts and I’m interested in cooperation, I’m interested in hearing your ideas, feel free to let me know and be a part of this process. Come to me if you can’t get satisfaction other places but don’t destroy the chain of command, use it first. Use the chain of command, but if you feel that you are not getting an answer my door is open. But if you do that kind of thing you give people a chance to understand okay they have an interest in me and my work and my problems.

Another thing that my wife and I did at our first post, we said people are arriving at this post and we need to get to know them. In Jordan there were about 85 Americans. We had each new arrival, employee and spouse, over for lunch with us at the house, at the residence. It was maybe the first time some of them had ever been in the residence and maybe it would be the last time, but we did. When we got to bigger posts we decided monthly or for every two months we’d have all the new comers, Marines, everybody all the Americans who came in whatever area they were. We had them to the house, we would have drinks and talk to them. If it was a place like Spaso House in Moscow, we would take them on a tour so they got to know what it was and understand a little bit about the history of the place and who had been there before and what happened in this room -- that kind of thing. It was one way that you had to do it. Maybe they never came back again, but you knew who they were, you knew where they worked and you had some idea that they were connected. This was one of the ways that you used to build teamwork. There are all kinds of tricks of the trade.

*Q: These are things that we hope can be passed.*

PICKERING: Exactly.

*Q: I mean obviously they won't all depend on personality but at the same time they are things.*

PICKERING: There was a very good book prepared I think maybe twenty-five years ago called This Worked for Me, maybe it was earlier than that, I saw it when I went to Jordan.

*Q: This was...*

PICKERING: It was a book prepared by the Department and it was...

*Q: Oh, This Worked for Me, yes, yes.*

PICKERING: It was experiences of ambassadors.

*Q: I think it was almost thirty or forty years ago.*

PICKERING: But it was revised about ten years ago. I don't think it's ever appeared I don't know why.

*Q: I don't know why. We helped...*

PICKERING: I helped to work on it.

*Q: And our association helped.*

PICKERING: I know, but anyway that ought to come out again somewhere. I don't know what's happened to the draft, where's its lodged or what could be done. I'm going to have to hop off.

*Q: Okay, well maybe we will stop at this point here. We put here we've talked about NGOs and one thing I didn't ask you was which NGOs did you find particularly effective, which were burrs under your saddle?*

PICKERING: I don't know I've worked with so many. Different ones had different outlooks and I was in different places. I saw a lot when I was in El Salvador for all the obvious interests. I got to know a lot of them, made friends with people like Human Rights Watch and the lawyers committee were always very effective. WOLA, Washington Organization of Latin America, so those folks all played a big roll. And then I got to know a large number of them when I was in OES; they covered a huge range of issues. With the American Association of the Advancement of Science we actually developed an intern program for post Docs to serve for a year in State, which still continues But let me think about that and we can bring them up on the next round.

*Q: All right, fine.*

PICKERING: Okay.

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*Q: Then we will talk about the role of Congress and other things too.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Today is the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 with Tom Pickering. Tom one thing we were going over some of the elements of government. How did you find dealing with Congress over a period of time what would be your considered opinion?*

PICKERING: Better than most people say they are at doing it. I would conclude, at least in public, that things went pretty well but never without difficulties. I would say one of the things I did at various times is I spent time on the Hill. When I was overseas, particularly in places like El Salvador, which was only an overnight flight away, I had lots of Congressional visitors. They were seriously interested in what was going on, they were willing to listen to briefings, and many of them had very intelligent penetrating questions to ask. From Jordan right through to Russia, my feeling was that you were in some ways benefited enormously by Congressional visits even if they were pretty difficult at times. It was hard in some ways not to create or strike up a friendship. It paid dividends in the end when you needed help and you could call offices and go back and see members on the Hill. I would say that I spent a lot of time on the Hill when I was deputy director for political and military affairs in the early days. Dave Abshire for part of that time was assistant secretary for Congressional Relations and Dave believed in something that I thought we never really picked up seriously -- on using the Department as a whole as a Congressional Relations tool; not full time. I think I earlier covered the fact that Dave had enough confidence and he had enough support from the secretary that he could ask mainly deputy assistant secretaries to go to the Hill for him on a whole series of subjects. I also found over the years that the Congress was somewhat chary of the H people, many of whom had come as staffers, knew the Congress well, but were not up on the substantive issues as much as they should be. They were not by any means stupid, they were very clever and they learned quickly. But the Congress wanted to talk to the people who had a significant role in the policy process. So putting people before them -- deputy assistant secretaries, assistant secretaries who undoubtedly had a role in the policy process -- was extremely valuable and they remembered it and it was useful in the future as you went along.

I had all kinds of experiences. When I was at OES we went and briefed a group of Senators on non-proliferation every month on what was going on and they were pretty open briefs. I told them frankly what I thought was happening. I told them what we were seeing. We gave them classified information and they didn't leak. John Glenn was the major progenitor of this. He was very interested in it and developed a relationship where I could go back, if I needed to, on a subject to provide corrections; I rarely did, but I did at times. When I was in El Salvador, I had them come down in groups and I usually asked them to stay with me, if we had room. We had a small house, but it was good because then we could see them for breakfast together, have a quiet conversation about what was going on and send them off to do what they were going to do during the day and then see them again at dinner. I found it useful.

*Q: When you consider that you have this fancy lobbying business here in Washington and the thought that you could have somebody from Congress sit in your house or be encased with them for a day I mean...*

PICKERING: It was very valuable in El Salvador because there were enormous differences of view. Up to that time, there had been a hard right Republican view in the Reagan administration that these people are about to invade us through Mexico. On the other hand, the liberals tended to see us totally supportive of right-wing death squads. We had to find a policy in-between and work hard to get rid of the death squads, but support the people in the center who we knew at least could be presentable to the Congress, but also have their own country's interest in mind. We were prepared to deal with the problem on the basis of the fact that they were going to cover all sides of the issues, not just the military but also civilian development and human rights and things of that sort. So that was a major effort and the fact that they came down and looked at this and gave you an opportunity to tell what you were doing was very helpful. We could talk to them about people in government and introduce them to the those that were engaged and that helped in many ways to begin to turn around the issue with the Congress. Everybody from secretary George Shultz on down paid a lot of attention to this.

I remember going several times with George Shultz to a full session of the House where they had set aside time to hear us in the House Chamber. So you had a real opportunity to do those things. John McCain used to bring the Republican Institute over for elections in Russia and my attitude was always if they are coming to Russia to look at elections I'm spending most of my day with them. As they went around it was helpful for me to talk with them -- it gave you had plenty of opportunities for briefings. With Senator McCain on a couple of occasion before or after the elections we would have dinner together with his wife and talk about Russia. The Republicans had more interest in Russian elections than the Democrats. At one point we asked to see criminals and others incarcerated participating in the vote at Lefortovo prison. They were a little taken aback, but arranged it for us within an hour or so of our asking. We often went to the polling place near the barracks of the presidential guard. They marched to the polls and voted individually. I would use the afternoons to go and see polling in my local district of Moscow taking my interpreter along. They got used to me and welcomed me. One polling place was next to the Ministry of Defense and we watched soldiers voting. They had a system if you were away from your regular polling place you could vote anywhere by showing your national identity card. The vote would be temporary until such time as they were able to check out the cards to make sure they were still valid and were not being used twice or more.

I can remember many times when we had groups coming to Russia and we had a limited amount of time so I would always take the opportunity to brief them on the bus from the airport, however tired they were. The combination of the ambassador taking a forward leaning posture and being able to talk to them on what was going on, establishing personal relationships, helped enormously. I still am able in my consulting business and in my support for a lot of NGOs these days to have access on the Hill because of that.

*Q: Did you note a change...we both grew up in the foreign Service about the same time and for a long time I never really had to deal with them outside of a few visits but I was not on the political*

*side but that there was a certain either jealousy or animosity not between the Congress people but between the staff and the Foreign Service officers?*

PICKERING: Sometimes a little tension, but I felt overtime if you treated them well they didn't fight. I felt that if you spoke with them respectfully, if you answered their questions as well as you could, if you respected the notion that they had a job to do you could break down enough of that tension to get through. They were human beings, most of them had tough jobs to do, most of them were happy to find a way to talk to people in the foreign service who were prepared to talk to them about what was going on and who were not prepared to play games. I felt there was never any value in playing games with the Congress. You had to create an atmosphere of mutual trust. The most difficult were, of course, Jessie Helms' famous staffers, but even over a period of time some of those were approachable in my view. A few were so antagonistic that you, in fact, couldn't break the code, but enough of them were interested in what you were doing to listen and ask questions.

*Q: What you are saying because I'd interviewed them what did you think of the traveling Congressman part on Stephen Solarz?*

PICKERING: Well Steve has become an old friend. Steve's first visit outside Israel and Canada was to Jordan with me. I met him at the bridge and we had lots of talks. Steve was as lively then as he is now. We spent a lot of time waiting to see King Hussein. I was tied up the first night of his visit, but he went and agreed to speak to a group of Jordanians and Palestinians. He said it was a searing experience. He didn't know well enough not to give his UJA speech. They took him to task. He learned something and he kept coming back to Jordan. Steve came down and see me in El Salvador about three weeks after I got there and we spent most of the evening arguing about what was going on. But Steve would at least ask questions and was interested in political subjects. When you got talking to Steve you got somebody who was careful, bright, intelligent and well prepared. He was knowledgeable about the critical questions and you learned something. So I always found that was useful and I always welcomed him. Steve and I are now both on the board of the International Crisis Group and my sense is that while he created enemies for himself in the Congress by his deep immersion in issues and his knowledge of foreign affairs and his unhesitating interest in putting himself forward as a major spokesman in the foreign affairs area, he also was somebody that in the end would come out with a point of view that was very helpful and should be listened to.

*Q: He certainly went into a subject; he exhausted generations of Foreign Service officers. How effective during that time he was in Congress did you feel this vast knowledge that he vacuumed up when he went to a post, how did it translate?*

PICKERING: Yes and no. I never agreed with Steve on creating a bureau for South Asia; that was a pet activity of his. I think now that it is combined with Central Asia it makes a little more sense, but the creation of many bureaus around the State Department as organizational imperatives to provide more focused attention to a particular subject is not a very rationale course. I had nothing to do with that at the time. I was in Russia when Steve was working on this. In the end he did those things that he thought were right. Some of them were very useful. He certainly was a very strong champion of human rights. He was certainly a very strong champion

of U.S. values. He may have had more influence as an interlocutor from the Congress on individuals than he did as a legislator. I'm not familiar with his legislative record because I was overseas for 16 of the last 20 years of my career. I didn't pay a lot of attention to people who were doing legislation, except where it affected me in whatever country I was serving. In many ways for many people overseas, he was a point of access with respect to what was going on. In Democratic administrations he had a significant amount of contact, but even during Republican periods he was able to assert his interest and his ideas within the executive branch, maybe more effectively than he would have been if he had spent a lot of time trying to enact new pieces of legislation.

Senator Stevens was also another important figure. One time in Israel, he came with a group from the Senate. Unfortunately for me, they had just been in the Gulf. They overnighted on a navy destroyer and the captain had housed them under the after, small flight deck. They were conducting helicopter flights all night and the Senators got little or no sleep. I was in Israel so they also had a few extra hours of being awake on the clock when they got to me. We feed them and talked about what was going on. Clearly, Senator Stevens who led the group was angry and irritable and took most of it out on yours truly. I had to walk the careful line between not irritating him more and trying to answer his increasingly challenging questions. One of two of the Senators helpfully came to my rescue before the evening degenerated further. They in the end suggested it was time to break the meeting and head to their hotel for an early evening.

*Q: Okay, well let's turn to your post-graduate period.*

PICKERING: Yes, I think we covered basically near the end of my period as under secretary. Individuals outside of Boeing approached me and said would I be interested in considering working for Boeing. I said, "Yes." Then they set up an interview with me with a senior official at Boeing and I immediately, of course, went to recuse myself on any decision affecting Boeing at State. We had a very good talk; they made an offer of a job. It was fascinating. Boeing was the largest U.S. exporter certainly in dollar figures and has been year in and year out for a long period of time. I think that still exists. But they had no general organization at the corporate level dedicated to dealing with foreign governments and airlines and indeed with let's put it this way with other foreign clients at high levels.

*Q: Why wouldn't they have that?*

PICKERING: Essentially you have to understand the metamorphosis of Boeing. Boeing until 1998 was principally a manufacturer of commercial airplanes and secondarily had a role in other businesses -defense and space were the major one. In 1998, Boeing acquired McDonnell Douglas, which was then a long time manufacturer of military aircraft and also acquired big pieces of Rockwell and Hughes, which were very significant in space craft. Boeing had worked in space and, of course, had made military aircraft They were a huge manufacturer in the Second World War with B-29s among the aircraft they built. They in effect with the acquisitions created a complete aerospace company, which dealt in all three major areas -- space, both military and civilian, military aircraft both fixed wing and rotary wing and in civilian airliners. Putting that together took some time, but each of the units of Boeing that grew out of that merger had engaged separately in international relations in various ways. Most of it was through their sales

and marketing people who were their primary contacts with the customers -- airlines, governments and so on. Secondly, but very lightly, they worked through people who were interested in opening up and managing their supply chain internationally. When I came that was a process just starting. They had looked at this for some time. They had looked around for people, I assume I was not the first person they looked for, but I was the person they settled on and I was very interested so we arranged, in fact, that I would come and work for them. I cut two weeks off the end of the Clinton administration and I started to work for them on the second of January 2001.

It was interesting in many ways because my first task was essentially a procedural one -- to organize and staff myself. The purpose initially was to set up offices overseas that would work in the countries of largest Boeing interest, if I could put it that way. We fastened on twenty countries. It was very interesting because at that time I sat down with a legal pad and from what I knew about Boeing and what I knew about the business, which was not a hell of a lot, I put down a list of about twenty countries and gave it to them. They came back to me with their data on sales and future marketing potential and I think we were within one country of each other in terms of what to do. The difference was over the Czech Republic, where they had an interest in a military aircraft factory in part to help promote their sales of commercial aircraft. It turned out one of my jobs was to help get rid of their interest in that factory some years later. In effect things were going well for a time without an international operation, but recent experience had shown that such an operation could be very useful.

The early effort was also undergirded by strategy, or at least by some thoughts and ideas for a strategy. The principal point was the fact that if you were selling commercial airplanes overseas many of the airlines were government owned or government controlled and certainly those that weren't, were heavily government influenced just by the regulatory process. So government contacts could be an extremely important part of what you were doing.

Secondly, those countries that were buying large quantities of very high quality items like civilian airliners or military aircraft wanted to know that their own economies were being benefited; they were contributing to the manufacturing of the large end items they were buying. Globalization in effect had become important to them for economic and social reasons, income and jobs. You had also to look at creating as you expanded your manufacturing base international supply chains. Many of these were supply-chain operations which were competitive in themselves -- in a sense that you could find high-quality, lower-cost manufacturers overseas. This raised, of course, a critical question of what would be the balance between domestic production and overseas manufacturing. Of course, we had inevitably labor questions. They were always important in our labor negotiations -- they were far from irrelevant and the strategy that I advised and which Boeing pursued was that in times of expansion you want to put a significant share of your new acquisitions for the supply chain into your major markets overseas where you can save money, build influence and assure the local country you are helping strengthen their economy.

I also decided and recommended very quickly that China, India and Russia would be areas of very high potential for the future and that they should be right at the top of the list of Boeing's efforts to expand itself and its work. India was not widely accepted early on and it wasn't until



three or four years later that India that had not spent a great deal of money on commercial airplanes decided that it was necessary in order to compete to spend something north of \$100 billion both on government airlines and private airlines over a period of three or four years in acquiring new airplanes. Boeing competed heavily with Airbus and got a significant share. It was even more interesting that suddenly the Boeing military people woke up when India three years ago decided it was going to acquire 126 multi-role combat aircraft; essentially fighters or fighter bombers at the high end of the scale and that competition still goes on. But it may well be the largest acquisition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of aircraft in terms of numbers of a particular type, so it became enormously important.

In effect, I had the opportunity between the first of January and the end of February 2001 to prepare a presentation for the Boeing board which I then gave them. It had been previewed by and then discussed with the CEO and President Phil Condit and by his Vice Chairman and Deputy Harry Stonecipher. Harry had come out of McDonnell Douglas and Phil was out of Boeing. The job that they offered me was a very interesting one. It was called senior vice president and I said, "Let's call it international relations." They were very happy with that and it has now morphed into senior vice president international. But I was invited in the job also to become a member of the Boeing executive council which is essentially the leaders of the major manufacturing groups and senior functional leaders in Boeing who advise the president and CEO. When I was there first it was 12-14 people but at one point it expanded into the twenties and then slid back to about a dozen people where it sits now. During Condit and Stonecipher, Stonecipher succeeded Condit as CEO, and now under Jim McNerney who succeeded Stonecipher, for a while the executive council sat in on part of the board meetings. They no longer do that, but it was a tremendously exciting experience for me to be in the center of discussions of critical corporate questions and issues. I learned a lot that I didn't know about finances and balance sheets and what they represented, what was significant and how companies like Boeing measured their progress and where they were going.

My initial effort was to create a small operation in Washington. When I was hired, Boeing said, "What would you like to do about where you work?" I said, "Look, Seattle, where they had their headquarters then is a lovely town. I've just been overseas for sixteen years and my judgment is since I'll be working with overseas people mainly, but not exclusively governmental, they either will come to Washington or New York. Staying in Washington, which is my personal preference has some justified reasoning." And they said, "Yes, absolutely and so you do that." So I set up my small office next to Boeing's very large government relations activities in Rosslyn (Arlington, VA); they had a whole building dedicated mainly to that government relations in Rosslyn across the Key Bridge and I began to collect staff.

The other major purpose, perhaps the most important one, was to engage in a very intensive and specific international recruiting effort. We did that at the same time. I hired first from within Boeing. One of my first hires was a woman who had spent a great deal of time thinking about international strategies and really became the director of a strategy building operation once we had set up the overseas offices. We engaged the overseas people in many things, but one of the first things they did was to make recommendations through the Boeing executive council on a regular basis for country strategies based on bringing together, then three later two, of Boeing's major business units. Initially it was defense, space and commercial airplanes were separate and

then defense and space amalgamated. So the idea was to create a country strategy, something we did not have.

*Q: You mean for each specific country, yeah.*

PICKERING: Yes, for the 20 countries or so and then a few of the regions that we were working in. The way we worked in terms of countries was that we decided in Europe the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain represented significant opportunities for us. Then we later added to that a kind of Benelux-Scandinavian single person job and an Eastern European job. But we began recruiting for the five and we used a combination of our own contacts; I had by then hired Stanley Roth and a little later Craig Johnston. Stanley had worked for Stephen Solarz, worked both in State, Defense and the White House, was an East Asia expert. Since it was an area where I had spent less of my career, I hired him to fill in the spots that I couldn't immediately cover. Craig who had worked as a budget manager and planner in the State Department, we were colleagues on Central America, but also had worked for the Cabot Company in Europe and brought a great deal of European experience and a lot of thoughtful and very useful experience in planning.

*Q: He had been with the chamber of commerce too.*

PICKERING: He was then vice president of the Chamber when I hired him. That took a little while and in the meantime we started working on an overseas hiring effort interviewing people overseas that either we knew or were presented to us by one of the major headhunting firms. In addition to the European area we put very high priority on China, India and Russia, but also on Japan and Korea in the Far East and on a person to cover Australia and someone to cover ASEAN -- in effect in Southeast Asia and we began to look at the Middle East. There we looked at the Gulf and perhaps the major Middle Eastern countries as one conglomeration with looked independently at somebody separately for each of Israel and Saudi Arabia. That is the way we ended up.

We looked a lot at Latin America. We came close to hiring somebody in Brazil, but then decided that overall given the fact that we were in a new downturn by the time, we would not hire in Brazil -- we would continue with a consultant relationship we had built for Latin America. Early on I hired Alec Watson who had been assistant secretary of State Alec had been my deputy in New York and we sought him out early. He was beginning to work then here at Hills and Company.

*Q: An officer here right next door.*

PICKERING: So, we actually made the consulting arrangement for Latin America; he was right next door to us here. So that is what we did. It was interesting of the first ten people I hired five, contrary to my expectations, came from inside the Boeing Company. The hiring approach was a little different. Condit was very supportive, was prepared to authorize the payment of significant amounts of money and that we went for a single person in each country. We looked for people that had the contacts and could develop contacts certainly at the ministerial level, but often well beyond to prime ministers or presidents and high level contacts within the legislatures. Also, we

needed someone who could move with chairmen of the board of major purchasers of civil aircraft -- the airlines and/or significant board members and or leaders of the airlines.

*Q: So you had to move these people up to a commensurate position within each country so that...*

PICKERING: We were prepared to pay significant sums of money to hire these individuals. Our idea was a small office, a secretary, a government relations person, maybe someone else who could support them on the military side. Our hope was that where our business units were working overseas already in sales and so forth, we would find a way of consolidating space to bring them together. That didn't work in every place but it worked in a lot of places. I was given a serious budget to work with to accomplish this. I am happy to say that we were generally able to take some of the initial budget estimates and operate significantly below what they had allocated to us. Over a period of time, as we realigned and strengthened our operations, we tightened on our spending. We had had one interesting appointment -- a Boeing employee was actually working in South Africa and with a very large budget. We were able to take significant amounts of that very large budget and use it to finance our first couple years of activity without any new money. Generally, it worked pretty well, and over periods of time even though we were expanding, we were usually able to come in below our budget projections and to cut when it was necessary in various areas as we found various ways to tighten up.

In a large company like Boeing obviously anyone new, particularly coming in at the corporate level, runs immediately up against the well-entrenched, well established historic cultures of the business units. We had two kinds of attitudes towards us. One was complete rejection -- what are these guys doing -- why are we spending all this money with these guys, we've been doing perfectly splendidly ourselves up until now why should these folks come in? The other was genuinely they saw some real advantages and could come to us and say, "I can't crack this problem. I can't get to the Pakistan government at a high enough level to consider the future of their airline on a sale that we know they need to make where, in effect, three ex-generals and one serving general were running the airline." So there were things like that that we could help them with as we went ahead. We worked in a number of countries where we weren't going to have representatives, but where Stanley, Craig, I or our folks who were out in the field, had a special amount of past associations we could draw on. We also tried to form teams wherever we could of the Boeing people in country and depended heavily on contacts and personalities locally. Early on there were doubters. Early on some of the leadership of the business units may have given lip service to it, but it took us a while to crack the barrier. I think that in my five and a half years there that was the most significant problem, but in many places and many senses it worked very well. The kind of people I hired I think you would find interesting and many of them came my associations or other associations in my diplomatic background.

We found an extremely able Englishman who came out of the British Foreign Service and who had been working in the banking world. We hired him and stayed with us for three or four years and then we hired his successor, another ex-British diplomat. They both had excellent contacts in the British bureaucracy and the banker obviously more broadly. In France, it was fascinating because it was the home of Airbus. Our public relations problem was severe. We went to a hiring firm; they gave us a number of candidates, one of whom was very impressive, a former French minister of industry. His French and French accent and his stoic approach to things were

transcendentally ahead of his ability not to look in anyway like Boeing employee. In many ways he has been an astounding success and has become a kind of special darling of Boeing despite the fact or maybe because he is so French. One of his early ideas was to expand our sales. A now almost open secret is that Air France, the French national airline, is an enormously important customer of Boeing. His strategy, which was very interesting and he got on this very quickly, was based on the fact that there was never a development that took place that involved anyone in France working for us that he didn't immediately call in the French press and tell them about it. He could gather them; he was still a counselor of the city of Paris. He would let the French press know about the business we brought to France -- several billions of dollars in GE-French aviation engine industry purchases for Boeing aircraft around the world.

Among other things he did as we got going and expanded our footprint in France where there were many good French supply chain people, was to publicize every new arrangement of Boeing to buy from France. So that played a role and in addition Air France where it has probably been the initial customer for every new 777 we've ever developed. They liked the airplane because it is highly efficient and very long range. So when you fly on Air France you look back in their magazine and you'll be astounded at the number of 777s and still some 747s that they fly, despite the fact they are the home of Airbus.

*Q: Do you want to talk a little about Airbus because it sort of rolls on the scene somewhat before you came on.*

PICKERING: Airbus was started 20-25 years ago to create in Europe an alternative to then what was the competition between Lockheed, Boeing and maybe Douglas which pretty well sewed it up for the U.S. commercial airliner sales. So with a great deal of effort and large infusions of government money, they produced an increasingly successful company. One early success of which was to produce a single aisle, twin-engine airplane, essentially the A320, which became their base airplane and it was a major competitor against the evolving 737 which we had begun before they did and which was a Boeing single-aisle, twin-engine airplane. But Boeing and Airbus had been in tough competition all around the world. Airbus then went to wide-bodied airplanes things like the A330 and the A340, the twin-engine and four-engine long-range airplanes. Then later they built the A380 which is the largest commercial airliner.

There were a couple of really interesting issues between Boeing and Airbus. One of those was the issue of subsidies and what to do about European subsidies. There had been a long study of their subsidies and USTR in the George W. Bush administration were extremely helpful. We worked very closely with them. About three and a half years ago they crystallized a case against Airbus in the WTO on subsidies that essentially said that the existing subsidies code had not been observed by Airbus and that large amounts of government money, ostensibly loaned to Airbus by European governments, but against repayment only if there was success in the aircraft. The concern was that this gave Airbus an enormous advantage in developing new airplanes. They developed a new string of airplanes where Boeing in effect, had to bet the company to borrow enough to build a new each new competing airplane. And Boeing had to repay their loans, success or no success.

The second question was -- what was the future commercial airplane strategy? Boeing had earlier with the 747 and indeed with the 707 developed a hub and spoke strategy with the airlines where major large aircraft would take people between large cities and then they would be disbursed out through feeder systems with smaller airplanes. This worked well for a couple of decades, especially with the large 747. But it became clear in the early part of this century Boeing had to make a choice as to what it's next airplane would be. It had produced already the 777 which moved the twin-engine capacity into a long-range intercontinental aircraft. Twin-engines are obviously much more efficient than four-engines and new aerodynamics and the new features on the 777 made it a very efficient airplane for the long distance routes it was flying. So what happened then in that evolution was that while twenty or fifteen years ago 80-90 percent of the aircraft flying the North Atlantic were four-engined; that was reversed in over ten years. The competing or semi-competing Airbus airplane, the A330 took some of that, but the 777 took a lot of it. Then Boeing succeeded in extending the length and range of the 777 and it's begun now to replace four-engine aircraft on the North Pacific route, which is the other long run.

The second point that looked of interest to Boeing in the competition on what should be the next airplane after the 777, was that the airplanes in the middle of the market between the 737 and the 777 and 747 aircraft -- that seat between 220 and 320 people in twin-engined planes like the 767 and the 757 which were getting old. They needed replacement and that should be the place to focus on. In addition the thought was we can do away with the nagging problem of changing planes twice to get from here to there under the hub and spoke system by increasing the range of these new planes and using direct flights between pairs of cities that can sustain the traffic at the smaller number of seats. As a result, we can compete directly with Airbus which was going to a new by then monster airplane (A-380) to try and dominate the hub and spoke system between major cities. While the Airbus argument was with the big plane you had fewer take offs and landings. With the hub and spokes system as long as you are feeding the big airplane from outside the hub city, you increase the number of take offs and landings. But if you have direct flights from Cincinnati to Munich then you don't have to go Cincinnati-New York-Frankfurt-Munich -- then you are saving an awful lot. So we went into this and Boeing did a technical look at what it could do and decided it would go for the long range mid-sized airplane and also that it would use composites which are much lighter in weight. It had also lot of new aerodynamic developments and could expect a new more efficient engine. Overall it could save 20-25% of the fuel cost with a new airplane. That fuel saving was the clincher, even before fuel prices began to rise ten years ago from the 20-30 dollar a barrel range!

*Q: Composites being material.*

PICKERING: Carbon fiber materials, not aluminum or titanium. That and a lot of new aerodynamic ideas coming out of the 777 which would expand and translate into this new airplane in to a very efficient carrier. The engine companies were ready to produce a new and more efficient engine for it, so Boeing adopted this all for the 787 model, which has been a very difficult development period for Boeing; a lot of technological reach. But even more importantly it, decided that it would disperse the supply chain for the 787. However, it didn't pay enough attention to the management of the new international supply chain. So supply chain problems have plagued the start of this airplane for some time. The management of that is something that has cost Boeing a lot of money and a lot of effort, but I think it has been well worth it. The

aircraft came in at a time when oil prices were very low, but even then the notion that you could save roughly 20 percent on fuel costs with a plane like this, made it very attractive and as oil prices zoomed up it became even more interesting.

So Boeing got 900 orders for this kind of an airplane just to start, even before it delivered any of them. Despite delays it has held that order book pretty well; I think it's probably lost 120 but that's not significant in a range of things. Airbus was then casting around for what to do and it tried to make a new airplane. Airbus was some way behind Boeing. They have a new airplane (A-350) which is partly composite, but not I think as broadly composite as the 787. They are going to try and compete in one and the same plane with new 787 Boeing airplane and the 777, We think that is also a very difficult task. So far it has been a rule that new models are based on 20% seat increments that seems to work well in the market. We will see where that is going.

On the subsidies, the Airbus story recently is that the first finding of the WTO -- and since ratified -- is that indeed Airbus has benefited from a lot of subsidies which are beyond the agreements and represent at least as far as I understand it a finding of violation. That finding has been produced finally for government, but it is not available to the public yet. In the meantime, Airbus has a countersuit that Boeing has received benefits from the U.S. government in the way of research grants and tax benefits and things of that sort. So that's now being looked at as well and probably will be decided in six months. (The decision was that some of those were government subsidies to Boeing). The outcome of that I would only venture a guess is that eventually with those two findings, whatever they are, they will represent a baseline from which the governments will probably have to negotiate some kind of new subsidies arrangement for the aviation industry. It will hopefully apply to others -- because others, Bombardier in Canada and Embraer in Brazil, are looking at making slightly larger planes which will begin to eat away at the highly important part of the market for Boeing and Airbus, the single aisle airplane that seats between 120 and 180 people.

*Q: In the international field during the time you were there how did you deal with the well I'm using the term its probably not really correct but the corruption issue, the payoff because all of this in these countries many of them there are a lot of people who benefit by taking percentages or something like that.*

PICKERING: It's a very difficult problem. I think that what happened while I was at Boeing was extremely interesting in the sense that we had a serious domestic problem not with as far as I know violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, but what I consider to be a huge stumbling, violation of U.S. government ethics policies. We had an interest in Boeing in those early days in hiring former government officials and our lawyers and government lawyers agreed that as long as they stayed away from places where they had worked in government and observed all the restraints, it would be OK to hire them. I had, of course, I had to observe the restraints of 'no contact' with the US government for a year on everything and for longer where I had participated in making a relevant decision inside the US government. We at one point hired an Air Force former lead procurement official who had worked on contracts that Boeing had. We quite mistakenly did it in a backdoor way which was stupid; the chief financial officer contacted and talked to the procurement official shouldn't. He have been involved at all. He talked to her and began a process of arrangements to hire her and then made a terrible mistake when this later,

after she was hired under us, came under scrutiny. As part of her defense she asked him to agree to a chronology of events which was untruthful. She had failed to recuse herself once Boeing started to talk to her or to tell Boeing to go away; which she had a choice of. She did recuse herself with Lockheed and somebody else at the same time and I don't know why she didn't with Boeing. Then in the end, and I don't know Stu if this is true, she said that she had sent contracts Boeing's way after this had started. She came to Boeing and worked in the area of missile defense where she had no Air Force role or contracting authority. Therefore she went to jail and the chief financial officer went to jail and Boeing paid the huge fine.

Boeing to their credit immediately did three things. They hired the best firm that they could find to advise them on how to clean up their ethics issues. They brought Warren Rudman in as a separate individual adviser and he interviewed all of the top leadership and examined everything and made a series of recommendations and out of that Boeing created a very strong ethics operation. Everyone has to take each year courses on-line to satisfy their knowledge of US government ethics requirements and related issues and questions.

Of course The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, to get back to your point, appears very prominently in those courses and everybody, in effect, has to be certified as having done that. They've had ethics recommitment days where whole units of the company, in fact, just stop and spend the day working together with teams on what are the ethical issues and how to deal with them. They have an open hotline on ethics. They had hired and put advisors in each of the business, so we had two of them over at our building in Rosslyn who were extremely good. So if there was ever an ethics issue you took it to them, we brought the lawyers in whenever it was necessary; and so it was the most intensive turnaround that I had ever seen, including in government, to clean up operations. Of course, at that time and beyond, everyone who worked for us, including every contractor, had to both be briefed on and understand and sign commitments that they would not involve themselves in any violations and we continued to watch it. Of course, if issues came to our attention they were investigated.

*Q: I would think though in your particular field you say you are setting up foreign offices and many of the countries where you were doing this let's say the ethics are not as strong and part of the culture.*

PICKERING: Absolutely, and we made it very clear that the people who worked for me were not the kind of people who would get caught up in such issues -- they were not selling directly. It was always through consultants that people hired to help them with sales that we thought we had the biggest problem; that was not my direct responsibility but I watched it very carefully to the extent that I could. I saw no evidence that any of that was taking place. Those contractors generally worked for the sales and marketing teams of the business units and who in whatever way we could made a major effort to ensure that they were not engaged in these sorts of practices. But this put us in a difficult position in international competition because, as you know, Europeans had less scrupulous approaches to this. While there was an OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, we did not think that people were very industrious in following it. Al Larsen went into the new Bush administration as undersecretary of state for economic affairs and we did what we could through Al and others who worked on this to see if we could tighten up

foreign government observance of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, particularly in the area of aviation industry.

But since then we've seen some enormous revelations; two in the UK. One in the military sales to Saudi Arabia and another on some commercial sales, where obviously the strict use of the convention as well as kind of international practices have been violated. We used to hear, whether it was true or not, by the grapevine that Airbus was deeply involved in these sorts of efforts to promote sales. Airbus was obviously struggling and over at my time Airbus sales in the six or the five and a half I was there were exceeded Boeing's by a very small amount. But they did and we always kind of wondered about Airbus sales. Their pattern was they used the big air shows to make a big splash and to collect a lot of sales that were ready to go and then announce them at the air shows. Our practice was that it was up to the person buying the commercial airplanes to decide when to announce it; we would not do that and we would not try to manage it for them. Some of them chose to do it at air shows and some not. But over a period of time also as a result of larger sales Airbus production for a time exceeded ours by small numbers -- in recent years there's been this neck and neck race.

Airbus has recently suffered some setbacks as their new competing plane with ours is probably as much delayed as ours was. It took them five different concepts to begin to sell the new airplanes. They are making a military turboprop, which essentially is larger than the C130, competes with the Lockheed C130, and a number of European governments signed up for it and the prices have gone out of sight and a number of countries therefore have cut their orders and they needed large infusions of extra money; it's called the A400M. The big A380, the huge airplane, while it has sold has had large cost growths and slower production. While Airbus has said this year they hope to sell twenty they have already postponed the delivery of a couple of them and they had serious problems. They had problems with getting the wiring right; in order to sell those airplanes apparently the internal configurations of the airplanes was different for each airline particularly the wiring that supported things like in-flight entertainment, which could be a mess. So they have several hulls of airplanes where the wiring harnesses are incomplete or wrong and where they will have to spend a lot of money if they want to use those to redo it, That is highly labor intensive and very hard to do once you've got the airplane put together.

But we had some similar problems with the 787 -- the concept with our 787 was that the person making the wing would put everything in it and that we would design the airplane so that the wing could be joined and all of the ganglia, all of the hydraulics, if they were there, all of the air pressure systems and all of the electricals, would be a plug-in arrangement so that we could reduce construction time or assembly time from a month to three days. Now we are working hard to achieve that, but we had problems with the suppliers getting all the pieces all done at the level of the wing or the fuselage section before we put it together. That has held us up a lot because we got pieces that were half finished and then our people had to go ahead and do the work before they assembled them. So you can see some of the manufacturing problems that you have with new airplanes.

*Q: Of course Airbus has the same because they parcel it out.*



PICKERING: They did, although there less so because since they are national companies Germany and France, Spain and Britain get the lion's share of the work and one of their problems is they have to keep the level of employment up on the basis of all these subsidies so they have to accept higher costs and inefficiencies than we do.

*Q: I would think you say you are pointing toward India, China and Russia. I don't know about India, you know obviously better than I but certainly China and Russia are heavily dominated by special interests almost party or connections of one sort.*

PICKERING: You know it is very interesting in China where we don't sell military equipment, so it was purely a commercial airplane effort, and our space cooperation had been shut off some time ago by a real dispute with the Chinese over something not that we did but another company did to try and help them recover from a satellite launch catastrophe. We, in effect, want to go on a little longer?

*Q: Yeah, yeah.*

PICKERING: We, in effect, had a very strong relationship already through our commercial airplane sales because China had been, and continues to be, a huge market for commercial airplanes -- given the size of the country, the number of people and the need to overcome some of the domestic transportation difficulties. So we had already begun doing some manufacturing in China. The man I hired for China was very interesting. He was born in China. His family came out to Taiwan and then lived in the States. He went to work for GE and worked for them in Singapore, and then became their major representative in China. We knew him and were interested and hired him. He had fluent Chinese and a wide degree of knowledge of China and started to work closely with our sales people in China and our marketing people. That was hard; some of them were not interested in extra help.

Some of the other people that we pulled together were interesting. Russia was a fascinating case; it's perhaps been our biggest success in many ways both in sales and certainly in creating a manufacturing footprint. Early on when I was ambassador in Russia, Boeing in the early '90s worked closely with a former government aviation research establishment particularly because they had very large wind-tunnels located just outside of Moscow. It was indeed the place where the U.S. saw the newest Soviet fighter aircraft appear. I went out there very early on and met the head of the operation. One of the engineers working with him was a Russian working for Boeing who I remembered years later. He then went back and worked in Seattle for seven years and came back and was in Moscow. After I looked at who we might hire in Russia and I looked at him I said to everybody who was running the Boeing operation that there was no better guy than this. I said, "He knows Boeing, he knows the operation, he's a double doctorate in computer sciences and aeronautical engineering. He may not know political people, but I can help him with that and he's got a great personality and he is a real leader." By that time in Russia we had developed a research relationship with the Russian Academy of Sciences and we were contracting research in up to a dozen research institutes in Russia within their national academy structure to do specialized aeronautical research for us of all kinds. By 1997, we started hiring a few engineers to help us design airplanes and we now have 1,500. They've designed big pieces of all of our new airplanes

At one time, we had to get a special license from the U.S. government for them to work on composites, but we were able to do that because this fellow I hired to run that operation knew all the best composite people in the country. He brought the best one to the States and showed the U.S. government community he knew more about composites than they did. There it was not a two-way street, but a one-way street for us. But we have, in effect, a controlled building inside Moscow opened to Americans and Canadians, because Canada shares with us the export control arrangements in this area, and only to named Russians who can work on these airplanes -quite unusual.

But we've done a lot of other things. We worked in Russia before I got there to develop routes for our airline friends over Siberia. The Russians made available former long-range aviation strategic bases as alternative places if people had to land in emergencies. Boeing and others helped put those in place through its own contributions in order to open up those areas for our customers. That is working very successfully and it's been increasing numbers of flights. The Russians get extra income through the payments from the airlines for the use of those routes. The airlines save money on fuel using the more direct and shorter routes over Siberia, both north and south and east and west.

Boeing when I was in Moscow, along with Rockwell and Hughes, rented the Russian supersonic transport (Tu-144) for research work. It lasted for a year or two. I was there actually at the opening of that cooperation. Boeing has a relationship in Russia with one of the world's largest titanium manufacturers. The Russians built a huge plant in the Urals to make titanium for their submarine fleet and the Director later expanded it and does special work on aviation alloys and research for us.

*Q: Titanium being a metal that can stand high temperatures.*

PICKERING: But more importantly it is very hard, very strong and very light. So it's particularly good for the aviation industry -- and what was also particularly good I later found out, was that when you are working with composites, aluminum and composites are not very friendly but titanium is. So for those pieces where the structure required extra strength in composite airplanes we used titanium. We have a long-range contract with the Russian titanium producers and actually cross-invested so that not only did they do the raw forgings for us but they now have a capacity to machine them. Now, rather than take the forging to the States to machine we can get a much better arrangement within Russia with this joint venture on machining. Things have ballooned in a very important and significant way with staff, because we had to convince American engineers that it was also important to hire Russians to work with them. It was easier to do this when we were expanding, when we had a new airplane and a huge design load. Because the prices for Russian design were highly competitive. We offered to allow them to buy into the contract into our Russian design operation to take on designing at a reduced cost because the Russians knew Boeing standards by then, they were clever designers and the per hour cost had gone down. So it was a very interesting arrangement. Our Russian designers are contracted for, so we do not have a large overhead to handle if the volume of work drops. This also helped us because over time we, of course, spent a lot of time with the Russian government on what we were doing and where we were going in Russia with job creation among other

things. When it came to major sales to Russia it put us in a competitive position and the Russians have split their sales, as the Chinese have done, between Airbus and Boeing.

*Q: Well did you run into trouble during the time you were at Boeing with international politics were being beastly the Chinese or the Chinese were being beastly or that sort of thing?*

PICKERING: Absolutely, there is no question about it. At one point, the U.S. felt very strongly they had to sanction India on something, I forget what it was.

*Q: Probably nuclear stuff.*

PICKERING: Something nuclear. I later found out that in order to ease the impact of India where we were working on a negotiation for our new nuclear arrangement and obviously had a great deal at stake, State decided to go around and gather up all the other sanction cases they had pending without looking too carefully at them. Boeing was very interested with India because we were about to sell a large number of commercial airplanes and we hoped to sell military aircraft. They sanctioned at the same time, the very large Russian partner of ours, Sukhoi, which was contributing heavily to our work and where we were actually a paid consultant on the development of a new small regional jet. The Russian said, "Look, we didn't do anything. There is nothing here that we engaged in that in anyway -- broke your sanctions." So happily I was able to call over to State and say, "Look, I don't know what you guys thought you were doing, but right now we have pending a multibillion dollar sale and the Russian government, of course, was very interested in this because they are paying for it, But now you've sanctioned this guy who is also a semi-State corporation for something he didn't do." I said, "I will bring over their top expert in this area and have him sit quietly with you and answer all of your questions and tell you exactly what they did do and what they didn't do." These were allegations they were working with Iran. They agreed after a while and this guy came over and I briefed him, but I said, "It is your baby not mine -- go and tell them exactly what happened." He did and actually they eased the sanctions and later on we were able to get the sale. But that was a perfect examples of that and from time to time came up.

*Q: This is where you were bringing your expertise...*

PICKERING: This is where my expertise and the expertise of my people could help. I had people who could do it. My Russian friend now has briefed Putin personally five-six times at various occasions and has gotten himself really well known. I was able to introduce him to people in Moscow, but he also got himself involved -- so he knew Russian ministers at the top level and introduced me to folks that I didn't know. It was extremely helpful because we talked to him and he understood the political relationships very well. So we are still in close touch by consulting with him at the present time particularly on the Russian account.

We did much the same in India. But India took a longer time to blossom. They actually have now sent their top man who sold Indian commercial planes to be the corporate representative in India. I worked with him personally on a number of sales. Now he's over there and he understands exactly what has to be done, so Boeing has been smart in taking people who worked on one side of the fence and sent them over to the other side of the fence to see how it works on that end.

*Q: What about one last question and then guess we will quit. While you were there did the idea of a super sonic transport come up? The Concorde...*

PICKERNG: It came up all the time.

*Q: The Concorde was going at a great cost and then it no longer flies. I mean it's obviously there.*

PICKERING: Boeing is always spending a great deal of time and attention on new development so obviously we were continuing to look at supersonic transportation. At the moment the combination of cost, materials and design doesn't equate with the economics. Back in 2001 and 2002 when we were looking at the new mid-range airplane our first choice was to provide an airplane that could save a quarter to half an hour on the North Atlantic run and an hour on the North Pacific run in lieu of one that could save 20 percent on fuel. We discovered that our airline friends rather would like save the fuel costs than the time and that people would not pay extra to save time. The airlines preferred the lower fuel costs which by then were taking maybe thirty-fourty percent of their overall costs and at one point ballooned up to nearly fifty percent of their overall costs. Every time we designed a new airplane we designed the base case which is essentially what can you do with present parameters in the way of efficiencies or size. You look at those alternatives and take them to the airlines. We had seventeen airlines actually partner with us in designing and building this new airplane -- they all had inputs. Of course, it's critical because you want to sell them the airplane. They have to feel that they own it from the very beginning and that's why we had such good sales. We pushed technology a lot and talked to the airlines.

*Q: Okay well Tom we will stop here.*

PICKERNG: Good.

*Q: The thing I would like to ask you about probably one more time I do it or so but as we sit and we've done these interviews you keep getting calls from various organizations that are trying to bring you in to bring peace into the Middle East which you've done a splendid job.*

PICKERNG: Yes and fall out of the chair right there. No, no, I'll talk about that and because a lot of that grew out of Boeing. I felt that it was important to stay current about what was going on and there were several ways. One was association with the NGO community here where I had something to offer, but they had plenty to offer me in staying current with what was going on particularly in areas where I had not already spent a lot of time. So I could expand my knowledge base and so I went perhaps to join some 30-35 plus such organizations for Boeing. Some of them I've dropped, but it has still continued to increase and now that I am working here at Hills and Company it also provides benefits there. It is one of those things that I do and it's a management problem in some ways, but it's also important in staying in touch with what is happening. During that period of time I've done some things for the Department, which I'd like to talk about.

*Q: I'd also like to talk about whether the Department of State and...*

PICKERING: Yes and so we'll spend some time on that, we may spend some time on a few things. You've asked all the right questions about Boeing let's see if we can wind that up.

*Q: Right.*

PICKERING: We'll talk a little bit about Hills but also talk a little bit about how all these things tend to come together.

*Q: Okay, great.*

*Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2010 the first day of summer. Tom what would you like to talk about?*

PICKERING: I'm not sure how much we did in Boeing since it's been such a long time since we talked.

*Q: Very little on Boeing.*

PICKERING: Oh maybe we should just cover very briefly what I was hired to do and what we did. It's interesting because it involves a lot of things that kind of fit the career track.

*Q: You know I think all of us who have been in the Foreign Service have sat in on country team meetings where we talk about particularly airplane purchases and all and how the French and to some extent the British will throw their weight behind a particular firm and we have to stand and say well you know all American firms are alike which...*

PICKERING: Well the good news for Boeing is there aren't any other US competitors in making civil airliners; some making military equipment so that's a little more difficult. Let me just tell the story very briefly if I can it won't be brief but let me try. About three months before I was going to leave the Department, I don't know if it became generally known or not, people would ask me and I would say I'm planning to leave the Department and I will look around after I leave for something to do. Boeing approached me through a mutual friend and set up a meeting to talk. When I came back from that, I then met a very senior leader in Boeing and they were very interested. They had thought for some time after they had merged with McDonnell Douglas, Rockwell and pieces of Hughes in 1998, that they needed something more broad than they had now internationally. Both the chairman of the board and president of the company and the vice chairman, one had come from Boeing and the second from McDonnell Douglas, were agreed on this. I met with the vice chairman first and he painted a very interesting picture for me. I came back and talked to Jim Thessin and wrote a letter and alerted my staff to the fact that these conversations had gone on. I had really very little connection with any Boeing decisions in the Department and knew very little about them. I had held their stock, a very small amount of it, at one point during my career, but had sold by then. It turned out that they wanted someone to come in and set up some international offices;. They really said we don't know you will have to tell us what you think you ought to do in terms of international operations. So Boeing wasn't sure what it wanted, but it did want some kind of corporate overseas presence, which it didn't have. Given

the fact that it is the U.S. largest exporter, it was kind of strange that they had no corporate level overseas activity. So I agreed and I came in and started to build a staff. I hired Stanley Roth who had been the State Department's assistant secretary in East Asia and worked on the Hill, Defense and the White House. I hired usually for my own weaknesses, so Stanley covered an area of the world that I had less knowledge of...

*Q: That would be the Far East?*

PICKERING: ...the Far East essentially and he did some Middle East where he had some experience; I then later hired Craig Johnstone to do Europe. Craig had had a lot of experience in Europe with the Cabot Company which is another American manufacturer and we started to build up the overseas offices. It took us three years and in a sense we looked at about twenty places where Boeing was very large and we hired people who were well connected and very senior to represent it.

The two tasks we had in mind were essentially to represent Boeing at the corporate level to do two things: to assist the sales and marketing people wherever we could in terms of selling products both on the military and space side and on the commercial airplane side. Then, on the other side of the ledger a more difficult and more interesting problem was to see if we could help build the Boeing supply-chain footprint overseas. Boeing understood that if it were going to continue to globalize there would be real opportunities for it to find people who could do work for it overseas. So we did some of that. We were looking for cost savings, special skills and creative accomplishment to help built the international footprint of the company. If you could tell a senior government official that a portion of the airplane they were considering buying was manufactured in their country that helped to clinch a sale,

*Q: Was this in the manufacturing or the spare parts or I mean...*

PICKERING: Well essentially manufacturing is spare parts because until you assemble the airplane everything is spare parts- about four million of them in the 777. But essentially we looked at different things. We got them started in India, and it took a long time, but we got them going first on information technology where India had a significant amount to offer. They had already done a lot in Russia which I thought was very interesting. By the time I got to Boeing they were doing R&D (research and development) in Russia, they had begun to design airplanes there -they had a small operation that later went up to almost 1,500 employees, they had helped the Russians open up Siberian air routes to Boeing airline customers. There were Airbus customers as well. But it made a lot of sense to try and do that -- so a whole series of activities of that sort made sense. Boeing then began to purchase titanium in Russia so these became very big activities.

*Q: Titanium being the...*

PICKERIG: They had already manufactured some tail assemblies in China and some of that expanded. Then they did some cooperative work in maintenance and repair organizations. They started one in India and they started one in China; China, India and Russia were easily the most important places for Boeing but not the exclusive places for Boeing. But we were able to hire

and find to run our operations and the idea was a small office one person with three or four assistants some for administrative purposes, some for improved government contacts, some to do research that made that happen. We picked major countries of the world where Boeing had activities and we did a couple of regional assignments. We had a Southeast Asia regional person, we had a north European-Scandinavia regional person. but the major places Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain later Poland, Russia, China, Korea, Japan, India and Australia were led by one person. We opened up the Middle East with a regional person in the Gulf and then individuals in Saudi Arabia and Israel. We looked at Latin America and started out with Alex Watson who had been assistant secretary as our regional consultant and he continues on. Actually he and I share space here at Hills and Company.

*Q: I've also interviewed Alex.*

PICKERING: So Alex did that and it was interesting. The major questions are the usual ones: how do you get a new organization fitted in with quite an old one with its' own ideas? How do you overcome the antibodies that normally arise and how do you take advantage of the opportunities, which we worked very hard at? We spent a lot of time at bringing our people in and getting them to get all of the Boeing activities in their region or their country together in order to plan strategy. Those strategies were briefed to the Boeing executive council on which I sat. It was the highest level advisory group to the chairman and CEO. We often briefed the Boeing board of directors on country and regional strategies and how we intended to develop those and where we intended to go. In many cases our people proved very instrumental in helping with sales and also in facilitating ideas about expanding the local manufacturing footprint. But the bulk of that work had to be done by Boeing's business units. The business units in some ways, unfortunately, saw us as competition as opposed necessarily to assistance although we were very careful to try and make sure that they got credit for everything that went on so that we could build our relationships with them.

It was an interesting exercise, a lot of background and a lot of focus on people that I had known or people I had a chance to meet as we went around on a lot of international travel. It required staying up with what was going on in the world and some contacts with the U.S. government were required. We had a very competent organization in Washington that did government relations. Many companies combine government relations and international. Boeing didn't although we worked very closely together and I think we worked increasingly closely together now. I was succeeded by two inside people and of the first ten people I hired to run country offices. half were from inside Boeing. But that was quite unique, we did go outside for talent and we found some very interesting and very valuable people.

*Q: Did you find or you did the Foreign Service bit of serving new cultures how would you describe the Boeing culture? This is very much the equivalent of going...*

PICKERING: It is and, in fact, Boeing had four cultures because it had what they called the traditional Boeing culture and they had a McDonnell Douglas culture and they had Hughes and Rockwell cultures.

*Q: Oh my god.*

PICKERING: Then within those they had sub-cultures too of people who dealt with different kinds of activities. So commercial airplane people were one bunch, people who made military helicopters were quite different people and those who made military fighter aircraft and transport airplanes were somewhat different. They had an entire set of people centered mainly on the West Coast who did satellites, so it was pretty diverse. Of course the cultures were different and sometimes they were very deep and it was interesting to sit down and talk to people and see what they were doing. People were very interested too in what we could tell them about what was going on overseas and how and in what way that affected their work. They became very much alert to that. We got lots of exposure inside Boeing both to help shift culture and understand it.

At the time I was in Boeing we had three chief executives, the most recent one who is still there is Jim McNerney who has been very, very strong in building across the Boeing cultures. But using techniques that I think have come out of their experience in manufacturing; you've had several concurrent trends to provide more efficiency to manufacturing and improving productivity. Some of it instituted by Japan and in Japan by Toyota years ago. It still continues on although Toyota didn't learn their full lessons as we understood last year. Some of it came out of GE particularly where a lot of the Boeing top people had associations or came from. GE was a primary manufacturer of the engines used on Boeing airplanes. McNerney began to build teams that represented across the enterprise different pieces of the different cultural traditions to try and work on different facets of improving efficiency. One area had to do with the internal administrative organization, the shared services activities that supported Boeing in personnel and rentals and housing and travel. Another had to do with how do you get more efficient at producing new products and investigating the production of new products. A lot of it had to do with how do you get more efficient on the manufacturing line and how and in what way do you engage the people who actually do the work in the process of figuring out how they can get more efficient. So these are very interesting and very exciting kinds of activities that help to build things across the enterprise.

But those are all facets of what we did and to some extent the organization has changed. I entered Boeing the second day of 2001 and I was going to stay for three years and then decided it was interesting enough I would stay for two more. At the end of five years actually five and a half years I felt that I had done what I could do. I was ready for change; it was the longest I had ever stayed in one job in my entire working career. People understand that if they know something about the Foreign Service. I thought it was time to hand over and get some in other people which I did. Boeing has brought in a couple new people from inside to do this. They all have different conceptions of what to do although I think the original approach that we adopted and many of the people I and my team originally hired are still there. We had a very small operation in comparison even with government. We had, I think, a front office of eight to ten people here in Washington and then maybe we had a total of 50-60 people all included in these twenty offices. maybe eighty. in these offices that we set up overseas.

*Q: How did you find relations or dealing with Airbus particularly the French side of Airbus? The French and commercial activities I mean this seems to always ignite a certain amount of emotion.*



PICKERING: Yes, they were tough and intense competitions. We had on-going where we had obviously a lot of understanding a serious running dispute about subsidies and indeed the U.S. government, Bush administration, started a WTO case against Airbus.

*Q: World Trade Organization (WTO).*

PICKERING: The WTO case against Airbus on the basis of subsidization. The Boeing case against Airbus has been pretty well decided -- they expect the final written verdicts in a month or two from now. The case of Airbus against Boeing will have a preliminary decision about the same time. This has gotten involved in the supply of a tanker to the United States government, which is now in its third iteration of bidding. The first one Boeing won. It was cancelled in part because of claims arising out of the hiring and indeed the operation of an employee who had worked formerly in the air force. Boeing had made some serious mistakes for which it paid a significant fine and people served time in jail. It was interesting to watch the reaction to that because Boeing instituted an intensive program of ethical training which I thought was very well done. Everybody was required to participate; still are. It was very rarified. It used information technology techniques to do the teaching and it required everybody actually to go through the process and understand what was going on and pass a test on each course. I think they should have done all of this years ago. They paid a high price for not doing it.

The other kinds of things that we did with Airbus related to contacts I had with former French officials who were now working for Airbus. We were able to chat. We met from time to time to talk about what was going on. There was clearly then on both sides an interest in a negotiated solution recognizing that even if the World Trade Organization decided both cases, either pro or con or otherwise, there would have to be some kind of a negotiated solution between the governments. That would require defining how subsidies codes particularly applied to the aviation industry where different people had created different interpretations of how all that should work. I think in the end, in the next couple of years the U.S. and the European Union will have to face up to that issue.

*Q: Was there any sort of rough papal to create who should have Boeing and the world and who should have...*

PICKERING: No, there was no treaty toward the market, we all worked ourselves in each market -- this was particularly in commercial airplanes because Airbus was only beginning to think about the military market and had very little to sell on the military side. Since then they have sold some of their civilian airliners as tankers to Australia and to some other countries. We all competed where we thought we had a reasonable chance and where we had a product that could compete and that continued and continues to this day. In many ways, the fact that there was such tight competition made both companies better producers of aircraft.

There were some places where for historical reasons either Boeing or Airbus had a large share of the market; Boeing in Japan for a while and Airbus in the Middle East, but that changed around. Boeing still has a huge market in Japan but there are Airbus planes creeping in and Boeing has now gotten a very strong position in the Middle East by working hard at it and in part by some of the contributions that our team made. But we compete in Russia. The Russians like to divide the

market fifty-fifty and so do the Chinese. but more or less and that's basically historic sales as opposed to current sales. So you see these kinds of evolutions and change.

It was interesting because governments play a huge role in many of these countries in the purchase of either civil aircraft or military equipment. So it was interesting once we had our team in place that could work closely with a government. My team was increasingly used in places that made a big difference.

*Q: I would think that if you were a government or an airline or something you'd like to stick with one because of spare parts and all of that.*

PICKERING: I think it is true and that happens, of course, Most airplane sales are made in large quantities because there are big discounts for quantities. Deliveries are then stretched out to cover the purchaser's views on when he will need the planes. Most of them are made for deliveries over multiple periods of years and so you could buy fifty aircraft. but for delivery over the next five-seven years to get a big discount. Then you might parse out your financing to meet those needs and get considerable discounts and sometimes, of course, juggle the positions of delivery to your advantage. The seller will sometimes pay for delays or the buyers will sometimes pay for speed ups in delivery schedules. Sometimes firms that are in adverse financial circumstances will want to delay so there is a constant juggling of what's called the skyline, the projected production levels for future deliveries. Companies have to make serious decisions about the number of aircraft they are going to make, which takes quite a bit of time. You don't increase a production line for something as complicated as aircraft overnight; it takes a fair amount of time and some significant investment and you want to be able to do it on a longer term basis. But it's very critical to your customer's needs and where you are going. Increases in production take a long time to organize and you want to be sure you are going to maintain that level for a long time to justify the expense.

*Q: Reading about strikes in Seattle did they have a major impact?*

PICKERING: Sure they do and I think last year Boeing shut down commercial aircraft production for a month and a half as a result of a strike, which set it back obviously. It doesn't help the bottom line because you are paid in the main for your deliveries not for your sales although when you make sales you get deposits. There is always a lag -- there's a lag in the economic conditions -- as economic conditions go down pretty quickly people cut back and retrench. As they improve they come back more slowly so that there is a lag in the recovery of aircraft production. But this idea of buying large numbers of aircraft over long periods of time is pretty important and, of course, that means that Airbus and Boeing, the two big suppliers, almost exclusive suppliers now, compete intensively for those kinds of aircraft sales. Obviously Boeing has always felt well if Airbus is subsidized we have a tough competition here in terms of being able to sell our aircraft and make money. Then the other thing that comes along is deciding when to build a new airplane and how to do that; that takes a long time. Of course, if you can count on governments provide you the capital or significant share of the capital to develop new aircraft that's a lot different than having to go out on the market borrow the money on your own credit not to be able to do that. So Boeing always considered any new major aircraft that comes along

particularly change of type is probably betting the company in terms of the capital requirements and the efforts to make it happen.

*Q: Right now the dream liner and the...*

PICKERING: Well the dream liner hasn't been a dream because it's been delayed two and a half years in part because of supply-chain management problems and in part because of some organizational difficulties. It seems to be doing well as it is in the middle of its flight testing, a good share of that has been done. They hope to deliver this year. What was interesting when it came out, it was seen as a game-changer, it was the kind of airplane that would go in the 250-300 seat range which is the middle of the market as defined by the number of seats on a commercial airplane. Airbus had a difficult time figuring out what to do in competition. Airbus had previously gone for a very large airplane.

*Q: That is something like double-deckers.*

PICKERING: The A 380 double-deckers, 550-800 seats depending upon the configuration and they did that because they thought that there was a market for it. They thought that the value of that airplane would be that it would make fewer flights out of large airports necessary. It was essentially a good assumption, if you could generate all of the passengers at the local starting point. But if you had to fly passengers in from feeder places then obviously that added more flights in and out to the airport. Boeing decided that for a couple reasons, including that there were many places where if you could extend the range of the airplane, you could fly between city pairs without having to stop in hubs. So it presented an alternative that took away the now hardly virtuous problem of having to go from someplace small to New York to Frankfurt to someplace else as opposed to going non-stop. So another four hundred and some pairs of cities could be connected up with a new longer-range airplane. The new longer-range airplane was also a technology bet because it involved the use of composites among other things. But it was also happily for Boeing and for the world clearly going to be twenty percent more fuel efficient, and so it was a game-changer. The Airbus opposition had trouble figuring out what airplane they would make. Would they make one smaller, the same size or larger? It turned out they were trying to make one slightly larger to compete with two Boeing airplanes at once. They've had some difficulties and they will be a couple years behind, which is not a good position to be if you are bringing on a new airplane.

*Q: You were pretty much on the commercial side.*

PICKERING: No, no we did a lot of work on the military side too.

*Q: When setting up sales and all did you keep an eye on Congress to make sure you had a good manufacturing facility in the chairman of, I don't know, the aviation board?*

PICKERING: But actually our government relations people did that and one of the first things they did was they hired Rudy de Leon who used to be deputy secretary of defense. Rudy, a very sharp and strong strategist, immediately said, "We've got to have a chart that shows how much work we are already doing in every state and every Congressional district". Everybody who is

big in the United States does that and that had some powerful influence. Airbus competing with the tanker knew that they had to have a base in the U.S. They went down to Alabama and said we will build a big plant here and hire Americans, if we get this tanker project. So they are obviously trying to Americanize as rapidly as they can to compete in that sphere. It was one of the hallmarks of our international position at Boeing to be global. I was in places where we had large potential markets. but also where we had suppliers who could do the work for us and often at considerable cost reduction. We tried to work those particular attributes into the strategy so that planes that we were making had multinational contributions and countries could say well, in fact, we are buying part of our own work and supporting part of our own jobs. It was a useful thing that, but it produced some reactions in the U.S. You can do that much more easily at a time when you are expanding activities and production, than you can when you have to reduce. Americans want those jobs. We've been through both of those periods since 2000.

And of course, American labor was very sensitive to any job reduction, particularly if it was exporting the jobs overseas. They were less, but very sensitive to the notion that when you were building jobs, and at least some share of those might go overseas and then you also have your technology questions. What technology do you preserve as game-changing technology for your own company and what technology do you share overseas even if it means you lose some efficiency if you don't share?

*Q: I was thinking the European market during the time you were doing this would be a complicated one because there used to be all these airlines we all know and loved so well. That whole infrastructure changed.*

PICKERING: Yes, initially as a result of 9/11 and then later with the financial crisis you've seen a work out and, of course, a lot of those airlines we loved were government airlines and the governments suddenly decided they would rather not be in the airline business when it wasn't paying very well. So a lot of that shifted around and they were re-aligned so you had an amalgamation of Air France with KLM for example. They were looking for an economy of scale and steady growth and now we've seen United and Continental come together. But I think we are seeing in effect, several developments. One is you having the new no frills airlines competing very intensively Southwest in the U.S. and Ryan Air and Easy Jet in Europe, where there is a lot of business and they offer really very attractive fares. They provide usually very good on time service, but without much in the way of cabin service or any other kinds of things and that takes a lot of the business away from what we call the three class airlines.

The three class airlines have been consolidating, finding ways to maximize their capacity to serve the largest and most lucrative routes. We've had a lot of deregulation so that companies where they used to be profitable are not profitable because of government regulation of what routes they could get, particularly international routes. They are now are freer to compete if they can find a way to kind of get in and out of the airports and compete for airport slots; so it's an interesting field.

Very few airlines consistently make money and that's something that the public is now coming to understand as they see cut-rate airlines coming to the fore. The other interesting thing is that manufacturers of airplanes are constantly blamed for the interior seat configuration and for what

amenities are put in the airplane in the way of entertainment and other such things. That has nothing to do with the manufacturer at all. Each airline that buys an airplane tries to customize the interior; it's very expensive and increasingly manufacturers are trying to offer a standard configuration at a much lower cost and then they will become responsible for traveler complaints as opposed to other people.

*Q: Flying from Los Angeles to Washington and back just last weekend I found that they would offer you something five and a half more inches for \$70.*

PICKERING: Right, in your seat.

*Q: Yeah, I found that hard to squeeze in to the thing but I kept thinking \$70 for God sakes.*

PICKERING: Well the airlines are looking for all kinds of ways to make money including paying money to transport your luggage.

*Q: How did you find or did you find cooperation and all with your work with embassies and with the State Department?*

PICKERING: Generally we found them helpful willing to go to bat whenever they could. We kept them in touch; they were very helpful in giving us briefings as to how they saw the local situation and where things were tending. I urged my people to be in touch with them; a lot of them were not Americans, but the American embassy was willing to deal with them. In fact, a number of the people we hired were local nationals because they knew the local scene very well.

*Q: Sure.*

PICKERING: We had the opportunity to do both kinds of things. In some places where we had facilities where we were engaged in the sale in a third country we talked to third country embassies.

*Q: Well did you run across times when you are thinking gee, this country or airline wants to do this but the country doesn't look like it's in very good shape or a revolution is in the works or what?*

PICKERING: Well I think that most of those were already taken into account. Countries when they wanted to buy airplanes for \$10 billion, had to worry about a number of things that were helpful and self-limiting. Excursions by the irresponsible in this business are not unknown. One of those was funny and you had to find a way most countries couldn't put cash on the line even in the big oil earners; they had good credit ratings because they had the money flowing in, but they would use the opportunity to go out and negotiate loans. The people from whom they borrowed looked at all these questions very carefully and wouldn't loan shaky governments with very low credit ratings or their airlines a lot of money unless they were very sure they were going to get paid back.

*Q: Now was there and some we know you usually think about but sort of a used airplane market?*

PICKERING: There's a huge used airplane market and the companies like Boeing have specialists because we do take them in trade or we resell them. Not only that, when there is a cut back in demand for airline services then a lot of airlines get parked in dry places like Arizona where they could be parked and kept, in effect, in good condition because the weather conditions are such that they stand that treatment very well. Those then are often brought out of service when demand picks up, or if not, they are they are scraped. At any one time you have in some cases thousands and in some cases hundreds of planes standing idle in some place. If it's going to be for a longer term it is usually a place that is environmentally friendly to the aircraft.

Most airlines will only buy a portion of the planes they actually need, so there are leasers -- and leasers are big purchasers of airplanes. They estimate the market, but most airlines do this, so they can adjust to changes in supply and demand by shedding leased aircraft as opposed to having to go out and sell one that they just bought. So they keep a base load, if you put it this way, of owned aircraft because it's cheaper, but then they keep a kind of extra capacity in leased aircraft because while it is slightly more expensive in the long run it's not if you have to get rid of aircraft in order to cut down on expenses as the demand dries up.

*Q: Was there much business in particularly small African countries where the ruler or whoever it was would want to have a national airline but would use it as his private jet when he wants?*

PICKERING: Oh I think he did but that was not our problem so much as they wanted to buy an airplane and if the country leader was officially powerful enough to convince the airline head that this airplane had to be available for or his or her person travel. Often it had to be equipped so that, in fact, it would be made comfortable and then the airline stood the gaff. Occasionally, we would find these and as you indicate people would order, but never could take delivery and you would have to go and do something else with the airplane.

*Q: For example, in Africa where I think there is a good number of national airlines still did you have a social place or did you have something...*

PICKERING: In Africa we had a very early office in South Africa because we thought it was a coming place of importance and it could have some central affect and we had a representative for a while in West Africa who covered most of the rest of Africa. The real problem with Africa beginning in 2000 was that the airlines were there but the viability was very differential depending on who you were dealing with. Ethiopia, interestingly enough, got a very early start in the forties...

*Q: TWA...*

PICKERING: ...and fifties with TWA and ran a good airline and seemed to have the ability to continue to have good service. Kenya did pretty well, South African Airways has done very well and the others are a lot more differential; Morocco's Royal Air Maroc has been pretty good. Nigeria had too many and they were not very well run and they were always in a struggle to get it done. Angola had government subsidies of significance from its oil patch so it could set things up, but it was engaged for part of the time in the aftermath of the civil war in Angola and just

recovering. So all of these places were different and I think we saw the market there as small but possibly growing. Latin America was quite different. Brazil has turned out to be a very big market, Chile has had a very good airline for a very long period of time, and Mexico had two or three large competing airlines and was a significant market. Central America out of El Salvador had a combined airline with other countries in the region, and they were doing well, Argentina not well at all, but Colombia is coming back with some private investors in their airline. I don't know much about Peru, but those are all places where in one way or another the airline business has kind of grown and flourished or flopped depending upon what's going on.

*Q: Well in a way Boeing has a stake in the fact that every plane that you manufacture is always identified as a Boeing and so you have country X where the place is poorly run and the airlines poorly run and the maintenance is poorly done. Could you do anything about that?*

PICKERING: Well we did and I think you are right. I think that Boeing has the value, but Airbus has too to some extent of having its brand name synonymous with its product; that has good and bad aspects to it. We produce regularly in close conjunction with the FAA (Federal Airline Association) a series of requirements for new maintenance, new checks, new requirements or new changes in parts; that doesn't mean we can get everybody who has bought an airplane secondhand to deal with it. To some extent the U.S. government works hard with local aviation agencies so that a number of countries with poor aviation regulation are not allowed to serve the United States; that's a primary barrier for some. We've tried to help countries improve their regulatory atmosphere and Boeing with support sometimes from the U.S. government and often working closely with retired FAA folks who have all the expertise will go to a country and sit down with them and spend a month. They will say here is what you need to put in place to get your aircraft regulatory authority certified as number one and therefore your airline capable of flying to the United States on the bases you have competent authorities looking after them; so all those play a role.

*Q: I guess Tom it is probably a good place to stop here and I will put at the end I would like to come back to talking about whither the Middle East.*

PICKERING: Sure enough.

*Q: I tell the new officers go for Arabic; it's a growth industry.*

PICKERING: At times it hasn't been, but most of the time it is. Arabic, Farsi, now Hindi or...

*Q: Today is July the 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 with Tom Pickering. Tom shall we talk about the Middle East? Looking at it over the years it seems like I've interviewed I can't tell you how many hundreds of people who dealt with the Middle East. Some of them really essentially sacrificed their families because they are so obsessed with it and the long hours and things aren't any better, at least in my mind, maybe they are better. But I would like you to talk about the time that you've been dealing with the Middle East and you still are concerned with them.*

PICKERING: By the way today happens to be the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Colombian independence; I heard it on the radio this morning it's neither here nor there. We did talk about

Colombia a few years ago. The Middle East, I would have to say the following. Let's look at it geographically. When you raised with me the question of the Middle East, I assumed that in particular you are talking about the broad geography in specific terms the Arab-Israeli question.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: The broad geography is interesting because, in effect, you could say that twenty years ago, maybe a little more now, because it was before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we tended to think we had one large problem which is the Arab-Israeli problem. Now we have done a magnificent job and we have three more, in effect. We have Iraq and Iran and the Afghan and Pakistan problem, if you want to include it. It used to be in the Middle East, geographically or organizationally in the State Department. It is kind of part of the extended Middle East in a sense that it represents part of the extent of Islam even if, in fact, it is not Arab-dominated. Let's leave those three aside. There is plenty room to talk about those and if you want to we will pick them up later.

*Q: I would like to come back to it sort of the overall view but...*

PICKERING: Let's deal with the Israeli-Arab question first, long-standing and most difficult. I can only say this that I do not join those who feel that it is a hopeless proposition even though almost any day of the week on the basis of the information ready at hand you could conclude that it really is.

I had the opportunity, as you know, to serve as ambassador to Jordan for almost four and a half years from '74-'78 and then seven years later to go to Israel for almost three and a half years or a little more. So I was the first member of what I like to call the schizophrenics club; having had a chance to see the issue from both sides. This gives you, I think, a feeling on the one hand of hopelessness, but also a feeling that particularly with respect to human factors, there are important positives. Let me say this, on the positive side of the ledger to try to give it some strategic context I think the following is true. If you look at the public and the population as a whole you have to say that on each side less than ten percent are radicalized in one form or another. The Israeli's would totally object to my notion that they have a real fundamentalist religious minority. But they do and, of course, some of the times small numbers of those turn to violence as they did in Rabin's assassination, to thwart the process. On the Arab side, I think, that the fundamentalist minority and those that turn to violence is equally small.

What we have known and the mantra that we've repeated to ourselves for a long period of time is that as we get closer to a solution those people opposed to it will become more active. I think, that, in fact, that's true. But the positive aspect of that is that over on the other side let's say 60-65 percent of both Palestinians and Israeli's are neither fundamentalists nor violent. I would say there are one or two other factors. They are willing in my view, because the present situation is not all that comfortable for them, to follow a good leader and take some risks. For some it's very uncomfortable. For the majority of the Palestinians it is extremely uncomfortable. I think for the majority of Israelis, it's psychologically very uncomfortable, because of the deep uncertainties about their long-term situation and their hopes for future country. It is less so in respect to physical presence, but where with things like suicide bombing, where they begin again to get out



of hand, that quotient will increase. As a result though, that 60 percent let's say on both sides is motivated, I think, in many ways to follow a leader whose credentials they trust to take some risks in respect to a peace settlement. I think that was true and on the Israeli side. The exemplars of that are Menachem Began, potentially but unfulfilled Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, interestingly enough Ariel Sharon, who began to make the change before he physically dropped out of sight. As we know, he is still alive.

*Q: He had a massive stroke I mean he's.*

PICKERING: A massive stroke and totally disengaged and no longer even been conscience since then. Then the pregnant question is whether Netanyahu is one. And the uncertainties there are rather large. I have some doubts, but I also have some sources of encouragement. On the Palestinian side you had to say it was Arafat, whose ability to avoid decisions was a highly developed art, and in large measure this came out of two factors. One, as a leader he stayed alive by avoiding difficult decisions or by making them ambiguous. As a leader, he was rewarded by circumstances for not making decisions. Every time he failed to make a decision the next set of alternatives looked a little better to him, so he was in many ways part of a bargaining approach that allowed that to happen. Abu Mazen has now succeeded him for all intents and purposes. He has neither the strength of Arafat nor the guile, but he is not without capacity to understand.

*Q: He is also known as...he has another name doesn't he?*

PICKERING: Yes, Mahmud Abbas, he's the current president of Palestine or the Palestinian Authority or whatever you want to call it. And that as a result there are questions about, as there are for Netanyahu, his capacity. The second thing that leads me to be encouraged about the Middle East is that it doesn't take a think tank replete with Nobel Prize laureates to understand where the basic compromises have to come and to some extent what the shape of those has to be. Without going into extensive detail, it's very clear that on the territorial question, which is one of the most vexed, there has to be a border between Palestine and Israel that begins at the line of June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967. Where there are negotiated exchanges of territory, most believe that those negotiated exchanges have to result in territory for the Palestinians, which is equal to 100 percent of the territory bounded by the so-call Green Line, the June 1967 line. So there have to be exchanges one-for-one, and most people believe they have to be comparable in quality and some believe that some of the deficiency that might result in those exchanges could be made up by other factors. One of those includes the land corridor between Gaza and the West Bank

One factor that has to be taken into account has been for a long time is the commitment to have a corridor or corridors between the West Bank and Gaza, under Israeli control, but exclusively for the use of Palestinians. It would provide a system of highways, fences and overpasses; that could probably work. There are other questions that have to be out there. Certainly questions of Jerusalem, which looks like one would want to see neighborhoods parsed out through their predominant population, because most neighborhoods even if they have a small population of the other side, it is a tiny minority. So neighborhoods are roughly definable and contiguous. You have to have Jerusalem as the capital of both countries in some way and you have to figure out, not so easy in this case, a way to have a unified city -- administered in the unified way. That means with its utilities and support base administered as a whole. But at the same time you have

to find a way to provide for security. Full access to Jerusalem, but will that mean full access to Israel for Palestinians and vice versa? There are other kinds of approaches to this, but they are not so far apart, that they couldn't be negotiated if you put it this way -- by men and women engaged in this process in reasonably good faith prepared to give and take because they really want a settlement -- they are tired of killing and conflict.

The real problems are that the politics on both sides are huge.

*Q: The right of return is probably not a...*

PICKERING: Well, the right of return is still something the Palestinians feel very needful of. On the other hand, the Israeli's have managed to bulldoze that so far down the road right now that it has become a problematic proposition. I don't think, this is my personal view, that it is a defensible proposition. If you were to let everyone return who left in '48, who are the legitimate refugees from Israel from inside the Green Line, return within the Israel's side of the Green Line the results would not be so catastrophic. Those individuals, almost everyone is over age 65, they are not of reproductive capacity. Of course, since they originally left they presumably are entitled to a right to return. But probably many wouldn't do so, particularly if you biased the condition for return in favor of settling in the new State of Palestine or elsewhere in the world with large monetary emoluments to persuade people to do that. Then the difficulty would be would you then permit some family reunification for those few who might chose to return? One could conceivably do that on the basis of a negotiated number administered by the Israeli's with some international help to make sure that it wasn't so prejudiced against return of some. The Israeli position has been basically that acknowledging the right of return is an open-ended proposition which will entitle all Palestinians to come in and reproduce like mad. Reproduction rates among Palestinians, both Muslims and Christians, is rather large and soon Israel would be overwhelmed and it will no longer be a predominately Jewish state. My proposal on that is obviously a negotiated solution which grants the right, but doesn't entitle everyone to enjoy it. So there is a big argument about this and one can see right on both sides of this issue. It is an issue, hard as it is, that I think could be negotiated within parameters. The Palestinians do not expect an unfettered, unlimited, absolutely open right to return for anybody who calls himself a Palestinian.

So there are many things to be looked at. In security, one can see a way through this. Without going into more of the details of what each of the principal pieces a negotiation might involve, with some obvious concerns still, it looks like an easier proposition than getting the people at the table to negotiate the propositions for a host of reasons. I was about to say that on both sides domestic politics, in different ways, Arabs and Israelis, Palestinians and Israelis, have differences that are severe enough to make it very hard to see how they could come together. Although I think it's not impossible, but that is one of the harder pieces of where we are now. One of the principal divisions, obviously, is the fact that the Palestinians are split between the Fatah group and the Hamas, between Gaza and the West Bank principally, but not exclusively. And while there was an effort two years ago to bring them together, to unify government, and there will undoubtedly be other efforts to do that, there is also the potential that a negotiation could get started with, in fact, the Fatah West Bank people carrying the load. Interestingly enough, the present Hamas position is they don't care to negotiate, but they will accept any result that the Palestinian people under a referendum accept. So it is not too wild.

Within Israel, obviously, the split is between the right and left, the conservatives and the moderates on the Israeli political spectrum. Israel politics is always split three ways: religious, left and right, and within the religious there are splits between conservatives and liberals. They all don't line up necessarily all the same way. And that is a very simplified rendition of it. At the moment there is a right wing coalition, but there is a latent feeling out there and that were it possible for Mr. Netanyahu to see his way through a negotiation, and were he enticed by the fact that it would perhaps put his name in history, were he able to do this in a way that no other active prime minister of Israel could, then he would be perhaps, embolden to take this on...

*Q: A little like Nixon to China?*

PICKERING: Nixon and China and shift his coalition to the center and center-left, who are more or less out there waiting. Netanyahu is not a national champion or war hero in a sense that he is not someone who enjoys a long historical military success. In fact, Netanyahu's own situation is a little bit vexed because it was his brother Yonatan, Yoni, who had died in the Entebbe raid, who is perhaps the military hero and to some extent Bibi still bathes in the reflected glory of that. He has always wanted himself to be seen as a larger military hero. He was reportedly a member of Sayeret Matkal, a special forces operation under the Chief of Staff of the IDF. And that is not a military slouch of any kind. He has also gained some following because he has been so very tough on negotiations. Those two items together won't make him a Yitzhak Rabin, but he may be more of one than any current Israeli politician. Whether that is an advantage or disadvantage, only time will tell. But those are some of what I would call the basic factors. As you look at it, the job of the United States whose role, I think, still remains essential in this -- and obviously accompanied by the rest of the quartet -- Russia, the UN and the EU -- is really quite significant. While the parties are proud of the fact that over a period of time they have negotiated solutions, and sometimes out of eyesight and earshot of the United States, it has always been within a context in which the U.S. and the U.S. administration at the time has helped to set, let's put it this way, the parameters and the stage.

Where we go next is very uncertain. George Mitchell is now engaged in proximity talks and the thought is that direct talks will have to come to resolve some of these big problems. My own view for some time has been that while it has its disadvantages an approach which involves a U.S. position on the critical question, some of which we were just discussing, on a level of detail which can rule out bad ideas of both parties, but rule in enough parameters so they could negotiate the final details will be necessary. It's probable an early indicated step on our part. Whether that can be evolved from Mitchell's proximity talks or in the course of direct talks or whether it should be a condition presided for direct talks.

*Q: Would you explain Tom what you mean in your context by proximity talks.*

PICKERING: Proximity talks are where the two parties sit separately and Mr. Mitchell visits them sequentially and talks to them. So they are indirect talks in that sense but he plays the major communicating role. The idea there is an attempt to build up nexus of agreement through that process. But another idea there might be to use that set of agreements plus what the U.S. finds out in those talks and through the long checkered history of this issue, which is replete obviously,

with pages and pages and volumes of discussion, to then put together a document with a near final text.

As to how and in what way that might shape a U.S. reflection and maybe eventually a paper or a position that says to the parties here is where we think the future rests is hard to see, but that is not an impossible way to proceed. This would become something like UN Security Council Resolution 242, the basic resolution coming out of the 1967 War, and 338, which is a procedural resolution coming out of the Yom Kippur-Ramadan War in 1973. But it would be more extensive and, therefore, more helpful and in some ways more difficult for the parties. Each of the parties clearly has ideas, many of them generated by popular pressure mainly from the radicalized elements of each population, about what they want the other side to do or what they will not do. This puts it well beyond the scope of what basically rational people who are experts in the area would tell you can work. What has to come is something seen widely as being a fair and balanced approach to the question, without at the same time usurping, and indeed it's an important right, the right of the parties to negotiate the critical details within those parameters.

So a big question for the United States now is are we ready to take the negotiations -- to put it this way -- up to the precipice of parameters or produce those ourselves as a way of energizing it? This could have all kinds of effects. It could induce Mr. Netanyahu to go ahead and take a risk. It could equally induce Mr. Netanyahu to go back to his public and get a new mandate, which would be in his view maybe to the right if he wanted to resist this. He would do it in hopes that he could do better under other circumstances in the future. Or does his vision of the situation have it looking so bad and the outcome so discouraging to him, that he wants to resist. He has always been aware that if goes for an agreement, he might not be able to stay as prime minister because he depends on the right to stay in power and they won't support a deal on a Palestinian state.

On the other side much the same. That Mahmoud Abbas might feel so weakened in the present process, that anything we might propose will lean more toward the Israeli side rather than theirs - that we would not treat them necessarily, fairly. These are things that might give rise to serious reserve, particularly if Abbas feels a split in the Palestinian position between himself and Hamas would result -- that they are ultimately even weaker than they already feel in the contest between themselves and the Israelis over the future.

So there are pieces lying around here that make this process a very hard one. The principal problem right now is essentially getting people to the table -- and getting them to the table under conditions where they may be able to move ahead rather than merely struggle to continue a stalemate. They see moving ahead as more risky, more dangerous and maybe more debilitating for them on both sides than hanging on to the status quo. We are, in effect, in some ways unfortunately characterized as defenders of the status quo even as our national interest drives us particularly in the medium and long-term toward the more risk-taking scenario. We are because of our strong attachment to Israel and for Israel's security, we are because the American Jewish community plays a serious role in American political life, not a dispositive role, but enough of a role that any party in power will want to consider seriously what their views are and the consequences of not paying attention to those views. It is a community for a long period of time, as I've said in some of my other interviews, which despite its clear ability to have many

individuals of independent thought, also now is more or less in a framework with respect to Israel where over the years it has become accustomed to supporting Israeli governmental decisions without question. And even more, here the predominance of right-wing Israeli political leaderships in the last twenty years has conditioned the American community to be more conservative than perhaps its natural inclinations would make them. The Jewish community has traditionally supported Democrats in American political life and continues to do so on almost all issues.

The approach of the American Jewish Community here has been shaped essentially by a very early position in Israel. That view, first propounded by the Israeli Labor Party of Ben Gurion, was that American Jews are welcome to come to Israel, they are encouraged to make Alia, they are encouraged to become immigrants and citizens. And it would be only under those conditions that they would have a voice in Israeli political life. If you want to stay Americans, then you accept our opinion about what is best for us. If that opinion is dominated, as it has been, by the conservative group in Israel, then Americans have leaned toward being more conservative on Israel. In fact, Americans know that if they are more conservative in terms of not moving ahead to a peace process that has risks and always to support reinforcing Israel's military strength, they cannot be making a mistake.

*Q: What about the whole settlement business which is being portrayed now and when one looks at it as though it is talk, talk, talk but events on the ground are really absorbing the West Bank.*

PICKERING: Well there has been no question at all that since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in '67, that the Israeli attitude toward the territories has been shaped by the group oriented toward a larger Israel. The conservative right in Israeli politics -- the Jabotinsky tradition in Israeli political life, Herut, Likud and so on. That those areas should be treated just as areas of Israel inside the Green Line, the so-called undisputed territory of Israel, for settlement purposes. So through all kinds of efforts including some that are highly questionable in legal terms, they have managed over the years to open up for settlement large areas, and encourage people to settle in numbers now coming close to half a million. One valuable factor of this is that the very large majority of those people live within ten kilometers of the center of Jerusalem or fifteen kilometers within the center of Tel Aviv. If that is land to be traded or potentially to be traded territory it is not as difficult as widely scattered settlements all over the West Bank, most of which would have to be abandoned.

There was an approach by Ariel Sharon over the years, in fact, to select and build settlements at locations across the West Bank which would make the territorial integrity of the future of Palestine impossible. That was then later followed by the creation of a wall that at a time when Israel felt threatened by suicide-bombings and other attacks, the wall could and did help reduce the impact of such attacks. But the trace of that wall followed an expansive view beyond the green line of what might constitute a new border for Israel with the Palestinians. So that if you look at the early traces of the wall, the West Bank, of course, sits on the east side of Israel, east of the Green Line. But the wall and its traces had four or so large fingers of territory running quite far into the West Bank. They went through the productive highland agricultural areas. They became a way of strategically making sure that Israel could cover the road communications into the Jordan Valley- Dead Sea area. At the same time, they prevented the creation of a contiguous

Palestinian state if Israel continued to insist that those settlements should be part of a future Israel rather than a future Palestine; not a contiguous Palestine only a cantonized Palestine. There were serious efforts made to contend with this. The resulting arrangements were on a temporary basis for areas A, B and C. One obviously undisputed Palestinian one undisputed Israeli and the other shared territory, but the end result of this was a kind of Rorschach like group of ink blots for the territory of any future Palestinian state.

*Q: We have a game of Go which is essentially surrounding territory by placing your pieces....*

PICKERING: This, of course, is the reason why many believe they should insist on full territorial exchange and certainly continuity and no cantonization as being the only acceptable routes to the development of a Palestine State. That still is not accepted on the Israeli side by any means. But it would be one of the concepts that would have to be enshrined in some kind of next stage document to set the stage for it, if it is going to move ahead.

*Q: Looking at it from an American point of view it sounds like a huge bill for us to compensate for us for those who are moved. I mean...*

PICKERING: I think that's right and of course, we have faced significant charges and significant responsibilities with respect to Palestinian refugees since 1948. Large numbers of them have lived in large camps still in the Arab world and many of them would chose, if particularly given the opportunity, to go to Brazil or Chile or the United States or Canada or Australia and resettle there. Or they might resettle in new large towns that could be built for them inside the West Bank or Gaza. Those are all the critically interlaced options that have to do with territory, security and refugees.

*Q: One thing you haven't mentioned and it has struck me from my time back in the '50s...*

PICKERING: But I would also say, as you've pointed out, the settlements are there, but the Israelis in the end have followed the practice in Sinai and Golan in part when they had gotten out to bulldoze them. In Gaza they left them and the Arabs destroyed them, it was nutty, but there was no real control of Palestinians or Gazans with respect to the Israeli infrastructure and so that ended up being looted...

*Q: It's one of those things that maybe everyone has learned, but who knows. One of the things that has struck me in looking at the whole thing is the one thing that unites or whatever you want to call the Arab world is the Palestine-Israeli conflict I mean we are all against Israel. It would seem from the point of view of an awful lot of Islamists they really don't want to see or these are outside or not directly involved but they really don't want to see a solution.*

PICKERING: But I think that if you went to anyone in the Muslim Arab world and said would you rather have a solution without Israel there the answer would be yes. But many now, particularly those closest to the conflict, understand that is not a viable or likely alternative. They may harbor hopes that the long-term future, like with the crusading states of the Middle Ages, will be leading to their extinction. I don't see signs of that and of course that is what the Israeli's worry about. Then you say well if we make a deal who is going to insure that that's going to be

permanent and defend it and how can we trust them and so on. They are big on uncertainties and the more those are magnified, the more the problem gets stuck in a static situation without any movement. The interesting fact is that quite uncharacteristically I think in 2002 or so, then Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, now the King, came forward and said, "Look, the fundamental arrangement that we all have to accept is Israel within the '67 lines in return for peace," and he later said that he isn't against the negotiating if it is fair and balanced of territorial exchanges which could be a criterion or parameter for an agreement.

But the other parameter for agreement is that we have to have full diplomatic relations with Israel in the Arab world and as a result of that we have to offer and put that on the table; that's a fair exchange. Not only did Saudi Arabia take that view, but he went to the Arab League and sold all 22 other Arab League states, including Syria, on this basic parameter and that's out there. For a long time the Israelis in their views rejected it over nitpicks, which is strange and funny because it is a central proposition, obviously, of where we are. I think that's increasingly accepted now, and the Bush administration was sort of dubious about this in a strange way, but the Obama administration has been much more positive and, of course, the Abdullah Plan or the Arab League Plan is critically important. We should do everything possible to make sure it is on the table and stays on the table. The way we do that is we have to make progress in the arrangements.

I would say one other thing -- you raised settlements. My own view is that settlements were a dumb idea to start off the Obama administration part of the process. Why? Well for a couple of reasons. One, settlements in themselves have only peripheral relationship to a peace agreement between Palestinians and Israeli's and to a two-state solution. They are going to be handled by an agreement. They are not going to be ignored in an agreement and making them the centerpiece of your next stage was to fall into the trap of those who wanted the settlements to pre-determine the outcome. Now my own view is that settlements are illegal, they have been illegal under international law, they remain illegal, and the U.S. has through very carefully and considered legal advice published legal views on that. Subsequently, we have taken that view -- despite the fact that from time to time various presidents have made other statements to the contrary. Now we have swung around to calling them illegitimate in the Obama administration. I see no difference between illegal and illegitimate -- there may be, but my view is that's the case.

Secondly, making them the centerpiece was taking on without the ability to introduce quid pro quos or indeed any other aspects, a Herculean task on the basis that somehow this would condition the Arabs to be a little more friendly to a settlement, but with no real commitments regarding a peace deal. Without such an understanding, the Netanyahu's party would totally revolt on this issue and would undermine it at every stage. Something it took me a long time to understand was that the money for future settlement activities is there, it will not be reduced, it will not be eliminated, it's part of the Israeli political spectrum and even with the old labor party remnants, they still support settlements in the Occupied Territories, maybe with some limitations. The best way to handle settlements is to go at the border and then allow the Israeli's and Palestinians to decide whether there are settlements that should be left on the other side and what they are going to do about it. Some have even suggested the Palestinians would be smart to say they are perfectly happy to have them stay there, they can live under Palestinian law, and, of course, you and I know what that would mean. But that's a very legitimate and generous

proposition on their side; hardly to be carried out, but it would be a good ploy in the process. So my view is we've wasted nine months on an issue that we were not going to get any resolution to and on that basis we not only destroyed some credibility with the Arab world, but with the rest of the world and undermined our own position to be a viable and strong negotiator. We did it against a proposition that we were taking not low hanging fruit, but too hard issues and that were only indirectly related to where it is we wanted to go. We would have been much better off to start working on the border, particularly areas where we knew it was uncontested, but then move to areas that were lightly contested -- to the harder pieces -- as a way of trying to be helpful to this process.

*Q: On this Israeli-Palestinian thing how about Syria? Is Syria a factor in that?*

PICKERING: It sure is and, of course, we all tend to think, as I have been, about them in their own stove pipe and not linking them, but linkage is very important. My own feeling is that the Israeli's would be very smart to open negotiations with both the Palestinians and the Syrians. I think they are ultimately concerned because they say well there could be a gang up or that neither side will move and condition their moves on where they go for the others and that is perfectly possible. But there is also the alternative arrangement, that neither the Palestinians nor the Syrians want to be last, because they know they will lose leverage. If the Israelis are in a position to exploit that, they will have a stronger negotiating position with the two parties, particularly if they can syncopate the negotiations in ways that make sense. There is the final bureaucratic problem of how much can you handle inside a government and, of course, the smaller the government, the easier it is to handle a more complex problem -- interestingly enough as we have found. In some ways it sounds strange, but that's the case.

My own feeling is the case that Syrian-Israeli problem is less rigidly in place. There are settlements in the Golan, which ultimately are in undisputed Syrian territory which will have to go. The principal border issue has been on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee and it's a little strange but the traditional division between French and British territory in that area at the time of the Palestinian Mandate was ten meters above the high water mark of the Sea of Galilee; well nobody knows where the high water mark was in 1921 when the agreement was made, so measuring the ten meters is very difficult. But the Israeli's have a deep attachment, as they should, to controlling territory fully circumscribing the Sea of Galilee even if it is very limited on the Syrian side. They want to preserve that big area of fresh water as their major natural reservoir for fresh water supplies without which they can't exist. So it has an existential importance for Israel. The question is if there a way of resolving that problem particularly when the Syrian demand is somehow to have direct access via shoreline to the Sea of Galilee -- so can they have access without control? There may be ways to do that. There is an area in the northeastern shore where there is a little bit of a delta coming down from the Golan and a little wadi, or valley, which you could turn into some kind of joint national park that might provide a way of settling the problem of Syrian access without necessarily having the Israeli's lose control. Another might be in a low area on that shore to create a lagoon for Syria, with a bridge over the inlet, or a siphon or pump filled basin, to carry the Israeli shore line road and control around that portion of the lake



So there are lots of things that are going on in that area, but those seem to be some of the major problems; the rest of them are pretty easy to solve. There is an area at the tri-point, Syria, Lebanon and Israel called Shaba Farms which most people believe traditionally was always part of Syria. The Syrians now claim it is part of Lebanon because they wanted to introduce a factor which kept Lebanon engaged, even after the Israel and the Lebanon fully settled the full extent of their border. It wasn't until all that was settled by the UN with no protest, that the Syrians suddenly introduced Shaba Farms as still an outstanding piece of Lebanon to keep Lebanon, in fact, engaged in the unresolved piece of the puzzle and thus to keep pressure on the negotiating process and indeed to help suit some of their own interests. But there are strong feelings that Shaba in one way or another will be resolved in any Syrian-Israeli negotiation, even if the Syrians hold out for a while on that point. But it appears as if the Syrians now are beginning to see some daylight here. It is possible, where once again reopening up our relationships in Damascus -- the nomination of our ambassador seems to be infinitely stalled in committee with the ability particularly of some of the Republicans to put a hold on. I think basically they are doing Israel's bidding or right-wing's bidding by keeping the U.S. from having a stronger and more cooperative relationship with Syria, and therefore, acting to promote that kind of settlement. So there is a kind of malign process that underlies this and obviously there is a great diplomatic lesson -- be careful where you withdraw your ambassador. Getting her or him back may not be easy.

*Q: It has struck me of all the stupidities of diplomatic practice when relations get really nasty between two countries you withdraw your key person there. I mean on the logic of this this is in all the diplomacy.*

PICKERING: Yes, I think it comes from the medieval period when the ambassadors were kind of symbols of peaceful representation and the absence of warlike tension. So withdrawing the ambassador at one point became a kind of precursor to war, like a declaration of hostilities. Now withdrawing one seems to have become a diplomatic process to show ire, irritation and emotion and directly contrary as you say, and I believe, to your interest in having high-level channels of communication.

*Q: Yeah, I mean I can understand withdrawing a whole embassy if you feel you are under threat. Back in the good old days along the Barbary Coast if you had displeasure you were, in fact, sort of declaring a declaration of war and you chop down the flag pole.*

PICKERING: The flag pole that is right.

*Q: But anyway...while we are looking at the Middle East how about some of the ...*

PICKERING: Some of the easier areas?

*Q: We have a few other things going on there.*

PICKERING: Let's talk a little bit about Iran and Iraq and then we will get into the others maybe later. I would say the following; I think that we seemed to have had a brighter period in Iraq on the military side in particular and to some extent in ginning up Iraqi's to take a larger share of

their future in their own hands. Whether it was through the creation and subventioning and supporting of a Sunni movement contrary to the insurgent resistance, we used them to contest what the Shia were also attempting to do in their own way -- to divide the country and control it. It is complicated now by an electoral process which was successful, but hasn't yet produced for the government. So I think the level of security has improved and as a result development and governmental activities have increased. The Iraqi's have shown greater capacity militarily, and in police and counter insurgency terms, to handle their own affairs. There remain, however, not a few very serious problems. The long term future of the shape of the Iraqi government is controlled in a way by the constitution, but still quite open in many ways as to whether, in fact, the 18 provinces will be significant governments units and will be a significant evolution in a federation. Or will there be a much stronger centralization. Or whether, in fact, the fissiparous nature of the problem will end up with a Kurdistan inside Iraq, a Shi'astan inside Iraq and a Sunnistan inside Iraq -- or all of them outside Iraq. I don't know. The 18 province effort is likely to be more useful and more responsible because it is less polarizing in the process. The future in the long term of Iraq is obviously to have majority rule with very significant minority rights entrenched and enshrined in an arrangement that people are fully respectful of and where they can maintain those balances. The Kurds obviously have the most to gain and the most to lose if those particular principles are put in place or not put in place. The Sunni are likewise similarly impacted as a minority. There is the related economic problem of how the money gets divided from the oil income; that is growing and obviously the Sunnis and the Kurds want to have their fair share. So we haven't yet got full resolution and there's never been a successful effort to pass an Iraqi law on that issue.

I think there is a third issue that is latent but potentially important and in many ways important in getting through the other problems. That is the question of Iraq in the region as a whole and where it will be accepted. The difficulties in Iraq are that if the internal factors were purely internal, both the religious and ethnic divides, you would be a lot better off. The real problem is that the neighborhood has more than a passing interest in this. The Sunni's with Saudi Arabia and perhaps a little bit to Jordan and Kuwait. The Shia obviously on the Iranian side even though there are big differences between Arab and Persian Shia. The Kurds on the basis of the fact that the wrong party running the Kurdish piece of Iraq will drive the Turks back for all the obvious reasons of PKKs intense opposition to the Turkish government and vice versa. So finding a way to define and put in place a future Iraq and the region is very significant. A lot of people say why don't we get the region together; the real difficulty in getting the region together is such diverse regions don't get together very often or very easily. The other real difficulty is that those who can have the most influence on the region have to be present, That is not just the U.S. I suspect the other players who on the one hand could exercise positive pressure like the British, the French and the Europeans in general and others who have co-opted and worked toward a solution in which they have an interest are likely to become lawyers for one or the other of the vociferous parties, such as Russia and China. So I think sooner rather than later -- and I've thought this for a number of years -- we need to have some work done on a regional basis both to bring in the parties, but contain them and to create what we would call basically a strong international consensus about these issues. That consensus then can also relate to reinforcing answers to some of the domestic questions I raised, which are principally an Iraqi issue, but Iraqi's are totally necessary but not sufficient to resolve the, but neither are we...

*Q: No.*

PICKERING: ...as we found. So you need to find a way in a sense to put into the diplomatic pressure cooker, we have to create -- the Iraqi's, the United States, the regional players and then the significant other outside players who can help -- to confect an answer. In my view you have to start by bringing the outside players into a consensus about where to go and then the regional players and then the Iraqi's, and that's particularly hard. But I think we had a Laos agreement in '62 which was much easier; it didn't seem so in '62. It set the stage for a permanent arrangement in respect to Laos which was frequently disregarded during the Vietnam War, but has now come back...

*Q: Laos exists and at one point it ...*

PICKERING: It exists in an international framework.

*Q: ...and at one point it was rather dubious.*

PICKERING: It sure was, it was all chopped up in pieces and everything else.

*Q: We are going right now in the middle of a continuing revolution in Iran but this obviously at a certain point will resolve in someway. How did you see this Iranian thing working out?*

PICKERING: Well you know badly I suppose at the moment, because they are getting deeper into problems rather than moving on. I think it's infinitely complex; I think I've paid a lot of attention to it and I've been meeting with Iranians off and on in groups and individually since 2002 or so. I visited Iran as a tourist back in 2004, which was interesting, but obviously no silver bullet emerges. There are a number of factors we have to look at. The absence of contact with Iran and the inability to have discussions and to talk is in itself a malevolent factor on both sides. It contributes to uncertainty and mistrust. Each side has domestic politics, which it cannot ignore, which are not insignificant. Iranian problems have been heightened by what one can only call the semi-failed elections of June 12, 2009 and ours are heightened by the fact that the nuclear program and the deep concern about it in Israel and the threat that this might provide to them with an Iranian nuclear weapon. And there are the explicit open and in many cases reiterated threats on the part of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and others in Iran about Israel and they have all heightened the sense of uncertainty.

The truth is, of course, that in the last decade at one or two times we've had quite productive relationships with Iran, particularly over Afghanistan. They went under the axis of evil right after that; the defenders of the axis of evil say well the Iranians took a number of steps, which we felt were threatening and malicious and we had to call them to task. The Iranians say nothing of the kind and out of the blue when they had proposed a wider set of arrangements to talk to us more broadly we came up with this idea that put everything into a tailspin. Where we are now obviously is that our principal concern remains the Iranian nuclear program. We have reason to be concerned, but the Iranians are saying that it is not true and that they have no interest in nuclear weapons, but we have a domestic program and the more you attack us for the military program and want to shut down our domestic program the more we are worried that you want to

continue to keep us in a disadvantaged state on a permanent basis because you don't like our revolution or what we have done. You are still pursuing a policy of regime change in Iran. There are others in the United States that say who say we have to move. The president has tried hard to move, but he has gotten discouraged by the Iranians and, of course, at the time it looked like when things might possibly go ahead back in 2009, Iran erupted in a sense of public outrage over what many felt was the denial of their electoral rights. Their position gets even more complicated because right at the same time Ahmadinejad, who was seen as the absolute bete noir of the whole program, suddenly came out in favor of having a set of nuclear discussions with the United States. He wanted to become the Nixon and China of Iran at least momentarily. Of course, everybody suspected these motives and said we don't want to deal with that guy, but we all know that in diplomacy in life you don't get a chance to pick your negotiating partners or the folks who are causing your problem.

I think that now we are left with three very stark choices with respect to the nuclear program. We can relax and enjoy it and try to prepare for it and try to inoculate the neighborhood against further proliferation. It would result, as a likely consequence of Iranian success in the manufacturing a nuclear weapon, in places like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE in a desire to do the same. We can go to war and very few folks are at the moment championing that. It has been helped a little bit because we see some significant slowdown in the Iranian program particularly in the numbers of centrifuges it has on line, working and enriching material. Some of that may be through our efforts to make sure that the stuff they get from abroad doesn't work very well. Some of that may be through innate deficiencies in the early model centrifuges that they were copying from Pakistan, which didn't work very well for the Pakistani's either. We don't know, but it gives us a little more time because there is a third option. It is a tenuous difficult one and it has its risks. At the moment we have now been through a sanctions exercise designed to bring pressure on the Iranians. My sense is that we have to look at the diplomatic option. The diplomatic option may or may not be enhanced by being willing to talk to the Iranians about other subjects including Afghanistan. There is a well-founded theory that such may be the case. Some of us have suggested that the Iranian have not gotten the kind of answer that we need to give them. There are deep concerns that our policy, which is now in Security Council resolutions, that the Iranians are not allowed to enrich, is standing in the way of any potential progress. Three or four years ago three of us proposed that we go to the Iranians and say, "Look, we are prepared to permit you to enrich. We will accept enrichment, which is their right under the NPT treaty, if they don't violate the treaty by making nuclear weapons. There are some questions about that. If you do it multi-nationally with other people buying in and being part of the process, using their own technology, and if you accept a broad kind of IAEA inspection (which they once did, but which they now have retreated on) which will all give us assurance to the greatest extent that we can get internationally that they are not breaching the fire wall against military activity, we may be better off. But the idea of asking them totally to move away from something that they now know how to do and forget about it. is not, in my view, reasonable. But we always seem to accept the reasonable proposition after it has become impossible to implement and that is sort of where we are headed at the moment.

*Q: Okay let's say if the Iranians do develop a nuclear weapon. In a way these are unusable weapons aren't they?*

PICKERING: You are right, nobody who gets nuclear weapons knows what they are going to do with them in the main. They are all going to use them to deter somebody else and, of course, what it means is they turn around and suddenly they've engendered three or four other people to do the same thing. That makes the world even more unsafe because if somebody uses one of those things, all of us in one way or another are going to see the structure we've built up to prevent that from happening undermined. I guess that is one of the reasons why the president said he is seriously interested in going to zero, which of course, is another way to address the Iranian problem. We have to be prepared obviously to do that and that is something that will not happen easily or overnight. The Iranians, of course, maintain on a stack of Korans that this is illegal to make nuclear weapons. One can only wonder, in fact, if they are so proficient that proselytizing this version of their policy based on religion you wonder how in the end if one of these things suddenly pops out of their factories how will they explain it all? They will say well we were threatened by America, so we had to do it and the Israeli's threatened to attack us so we had to. So far they haven't done that and that it's interesting.

So there are three schools of thought. One school which is a little bit naive says we ought to take them entirely at their word and any evidence we see to the contrary is an anomaly; it is rogue or doesn't exist or was fabricated. Another says there is no question that they are bound and determined on this course, and nothing will stop them. They will continue until they have a weapon and they are so malevolent and so difficult and so nasty that they might even put that weapon into the hands of people who as terrorists would use it against us or Israel or some other convenient target. They don't care they are reckless. The third says well most of them don't want it, but some do. So they are chipping away at this and getting themselves to the point where they are sort of a screwdriver turn away from having a weapon; which is what we used to say about the Pakistan, and then they'll stop. They will then say, in effect, we are a nuclear power, they've already said that but we are already a nuclear power so don't threaten us, watch out for us and will try to take advantage of all of the profound and inspired glory that they see coming out of having a nuclear weapon and being in the cat-bird seat and being among one of the few countries in the world who have succeeded in making this monstrous device even if they don't know what to do with it. But that they will act in ways that are fairly conservative even if they have it because they know, in fact, that deterrence will operate, that we will certainly say to them if any weapon is used of theirs they can expect massive retaliation and they don't want to see that. Also, that we will do everything possible to sit down with the Turks and the Saudi's and the Egyptians and the UAE and everybody else and say there is no need for you to manufacture a nuclear weapon. We will help you with your civil program if you want with a very strong firewall in between, but our weapons are at your service if you are ever threatened. Now whether we have to go as far as NATO did in saying that there are weapons there to be delivered by NATO pilots flying from NATO air fields or not in order to assure them, in fact, that our word is our bond on this, is hard to say.

So that's the kind of nasty range of difficult problems that we have to put up with. But I think it's sort of in between one and three. There is no reason why we should accept as a fate de accompli something that hasn't happened -- something that is potentially as dangerous as a destabilizing and uncertain consequence in a critical area for the United States and its interests. However, we have energy interests, we have friendly interests, we have commitments, we have geo-political interests where we now have American troops engaged in two wars that are in a sense close to

that area, so close that, in fact, we could slop over, if we are not careful. And it does seem to me that it is a little bit crazy for the moment that we are holding back on making some of the kinds of proposals that I've suggested, even if they fail they will at last smoke out ever more clearly the determination of the Iranians to prevent any effort to limit their program to civil purposes only.

*Q: Maybe this is a good place to stop.*

PICKERING: It probably is.

*Q: We'll move on to Pakistan and Afghanistan.*

PICKERING: And then we might move on to diplomatic personalities.

*Q: Diplomatic personalities.*

PICKERING: I think there is a little bit of talking about the future of the State Department.

*Q: Yeah, absolutely.*

PICKERING: And how that fits and then maybe we will wind up these conversations for 400 years that we've been having.

*Q: Today is the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 with Tom Pickering. Tom I know you've gotten involved on diplomatic things above and beyond sort of business. I've been here and you've gotten calls on Israeli matters, which crop up from time to time; I'm laughing at that. But would you comment on your thoughts on that.*

PICKERING: Yes, I think that these are taken in three forms. Let me just quickly put it into context. While I was at Boeing I thought that participation in the significant number of groups and activities here in Washington and beyond that were devoted to keeping up with foreign relations, understanding it and perhaps making contributions there were useful. So things like the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Diplomacy to which I belong, the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown and others were groups I was asked to join and did. Other people have come forward and asked me if I would participate in studies or work with them on particular kinds of activities and some of those have involved the Department. Secretary Rice wanted to bring a group of people together on transformation and diplomacy and I was asked to work there on things like the Department and its activities and organizations.

*Q: You might explain what transformation is.*

PICKERING: Well transformational diplomacy was an idea of Secretary Rice that tried to make a set of actions and activities to bring the Department in her view in closer consonance with what was going on in the changing world. Principally globalization and the involvement in many other non-State actors in foreign affairs are two of the attributes of this. I have given speeches and

people have asked me to talk and a number of these organizations. The International Crisis Group, for example, has been involved in one way or another in providing advice to governments. I've stayed in touch with colleagues in the Department off and on regarding various subjects. Often they included Iran, sometimes Afghanistan, and sometimes other issues - non-proliferation and sometimes questions of overall strategy. So it's been useful and interesting to have had that kind of a role. The nice thing about being out of the government is you don't have a governmental view to deal with except in terms of your own vision of that and what it should be. It's been interesting that in many of these things the benefits that I derived particularly from my business interests is that you can stay up with the rapid movement of questions and what's going on. I've been back and forth to Russia, back and forth to India, visits to China, in and out of Africa occasionally; more often Europe, occasionally in Latin America over this period since I've left the Department and these have helped to form my own views and thus to be a better provider of advice as a consultant and in and to the media.

I don't think that necessarily this has meant that in any way at all this has become kind of eminence grise affair, but it's been helpful to me and useful perhaps on occasion to other people who have had a view point from someone who's spent some time on the questions. I would say a couple things. One is you get out of date fairly quickly, particularly on what is going on in the Department and how it's operating, unless you try to stay up. Then you only get a partial view, you get a snap shot of what's happening from time-to-time. So you learn, in fact, try to make your advice relevant on the basis of a more complete understanding of what's going on rather than necessarily kind of throwing it out for free. I think it's useful to protect confidences and if that is the case both in many of my conversations things of that sort remain private although I get frequently called upon to speak on radio or television about issues. There I try to reflect my own views without trying to attribute things to other folks who aren't necessarily happy to have me produce confidences on the air for whatever sensation or reason it might have.

I think that one interesting factor has been that until WikiLeaks I've not had a large opportunity to read a lot of what people are writing in the field.

*Q: You might want to explain what WikiLeaks is.*

PICKERING: WikiLeaks is essentially a situation in which, at least it is alleged, that an Army private downloaded a lot of material the Department had made available to the governmental community on a classified basis on something called SIPRNet, which was a classified Defense Department communications arrangement on the Internet. Apparently, these downloaded documents were handed over in an operation called WikiLeaks, which is now feeding them out. There was a large volume of defense information and now apparently a large volume of State Department information. It's been interesting despite the fact that some of the links have obviously potentially endangered sources and certainly created a set of, let's put it this way, dyspepsia and perhaps anguish both among foreigners who have not been portrayed in flattering terms and or American officials who have written those kinds of analysis and summaries. My own view is that there is a clear sense in the international community, which has been expressed by a number of people who follow issues and write in the press on these columnists' writers, that American diplomacy is doing its job efficiently and well. People write in literate fashion, that their insights are useful and they are not slavish co-optees necessarily to the localism which has

sometimes afflicted diplomats in foreign countries. It has not been something the U.S. has entirely escaped, but it is good, in fact, to see that we can talk within the government and express critical assessments and analyses on what is going on as a basis for our foreign policy. Much of this has been good. Over a period of time, when I was under secretary, it was very useful to have outside opinions. Sometimes they were not welcomed, but they were nevertheless useful to have. They raised questions, which you clearly had to answer, if you felt your policy was going to comport with reality and become effective. Those were important and significant episodes and being on the other side of it was both entertaining and interesting and sometimes challenging and rewarding to at least be able to say okay people are prepared to listen to the Department, people are prepared to take into account what your points of view are and in some cases maybe even helpful.

*Q: Look, turning to areas that are of particular interest there is no point in getting into Afghanistan. I mean Alexander the Great had his problems and we have ours.*

PICKERING: Actually I would say currently I'm struggling to work on a report for a group that Lakhdar Brahimi, the former Algerian foreign minister and I co-chair with an advisory group that is half non-Americans roughly to talk about whether there is a negotiating option in Afghanistan. There seem to be a very interesting set of possibilities. There are very firm views on this issue. We were just talking today, Richard Holbrook died yesterday, but I stayed in touch with Richard as much as anyone can stay in touch with Richard on this issue. It was very clear that he was both supportive of the effort and interested in the outcome and I think understood not as much for personal as official reasons that a diplomatic role here for the United States, and a diplomatic effort of the United States which would probably center around him, would be very important for the future of dealing with this problem.

*Q: Well I like to turn to Arab-Israeli issues.*

PICKERING: Yes.

*Q: Looking at it today obviously once you got stuck with that tar baby you could never let it go and you've had more than most. How do you feel the situation is evolving as you see it?*

PICKERING: Well, I don't think it's evolving -- well, but I don't think it's evolving unpredictably. There is no question at all that at the moment each of the parties is heavily dominated by considerations that make it very difficult for them to see their way clear to making what we all know and understand are the big commitments and compromises that will be required to create a deal between them. The Palestinians, in part, are weakened because they are divided and, in part, because they have weaknesses that stem from the disintegration of the Palestinian organization when Arafat died and that the disputes inside and the limitations that has put on the leaders who have emerged. On the Israeli side, because of the very strong influence in situations when the whole position in the region becomes both challenging on the one hand and also from the Israeli perspective controllable by force, Israeli public opinion usually shifts in the direction of the conservative leader. He is the one who makes the fewest demands for political change. That is certainly showing now that Mr. Netanyahu is in office. The Israeli body politic is divided. My own experience is it tends to be divided both by ideology but by time and place to



some extent. So when the leader comes in that is prepared to offer stability in the short term against the prospect of significant anguish to get to a longer term arrangement that, perhaps, can provide a better answer to their serious doubts in the body politic in Israel after their 50 some years of experience and uncertainty in this part of the world, the Israeli voting public lean toward the conservative leader. They lean away from someone who's prepared to call upon them to make serious sacrifices in uncertain situations. This is not a strange situation in political terms around the world.

*Q: No, I was reading in the Economist that the Israeli army seems to be getting more and more Orthodox, which means it's not as much a certain instrument for doing things.*

PICKERING: This is possibly true because the movements that gave rise to what one would have called labor and progressive and socialist people, principally in the Kibbutz movement and to some extent the Moshav movement, have declined. In the meantime, much activity is centered around the roughly still twenty percent of Israel, which is Orthodox, observant and maybe Haredim -- related to the East European rabbinical tradition, which inspires some Jewish believers. As a result, the Orthodox seem to be more willing now to put people in the military whereas in the past their posture has been to take advantage of religious exceptions to study Torah. So at least some part of the Orthodox community is contributing people to the Israeli military and not taking advantage of the special exception. I suspect that is turning the balance to some extent. If you look at the history of Israeli politics up until say fifteen years ago the bulk of the general officers who aspired to political roles have come out of essentially Labor and the Kibbutzim. Now more are coming from the Orthodox tradition -- I'll put it this way, and many of these were Ashkenazim -- people with European Jewish tradition and history. Now more are coming out of Oriental Jewry, those who had origins in the Arab and Mediterranean world, and more are coming out of the Orthodox world. They have had a tendency to be more in line with conservative political views and more -- in some cases -- more religious. As a result they help make it more difficult to deal with the domestic political complexities of the peace process.

*Q: We even in our own society we have somewhat of this problem of right wing Christians have always tended to go to the armed forces in larger numbers.*

PICKERING: Yes, that's true. You have the same sort of thing with respect to Israel. You have Evangelical Christians who believe, in fact, that the primary concomitant for the millennial period to come is the successful restoration of Israel. After that there are beliefs about Israelis and Jews that are much less palatable, if you are Jewish.

*Q: Do you see any change in American leadership towards the problem?*

PICKERING: In the past, Americans, even though they were among the first to recognize Israel and were in many ways entranced by Israel and its effort to try, as a small country in a hostile environment, to settle and improve and develop itself and bring in people, they have become less critical of Israel. That means they are less willing to be critical of Israel, more mesmerized by the notion that they had to find a way, particularly in the American domestic political context, to afford Israel, if I can put it this way, all the leeway that they could muster. They do so in part for domestic political reasons and, in part, because of emotional and, for some Evangelicals,

religious attachment. Obviously it's been a situation in which a rather effective and still a very well operated Jewish lobby under AIPAC here has affected the political scene. Individual representatives and Senators listen very closely to what AIPAC has to say and decide to oppose it at their peril in terms of their ability to get re-elected. That is a reality that cannot be papered over.

On the other hand, I can remember very well Yitzhak Rabin telling me that he was not convinced that AIPAC in the long run was in the best interest of Israel. To some extent my experience has been, certainly since my time of service in Israel, that AIPAC has become closer in its ideological outlook to the Likud, Herut tradition, Jabotinsky tradition, in Israel as opposed to what the old Labor Party thought. This is not astonishing. For most of the recent period, leaders in that tradition have governed in Israel. But this is not what those people in Israel who consider themselves pro-peace and pro-Progressive have thought was the right approach. To some extent that is reflected as well the conservative mindset in America and to some extent, perhaps, the conservative mindset among American Jewry. It is quite interesting that Democrats can usually count on sixty-five to seventy-five percent of the Jewish vote in the United States. But they are careful, as are the Republicans, not to take positions that will raise the specter of extreme differences with Israel because of uncertainty as to where that vote will go and where that support will go. This is especially true regarding the question of the ability to muster funding and a capacity to speak out on these issues -- all of which I believe people consider to be formidable capacities on the part of AIPAC. So AIPAC in many ways has been highly successful, but it has turned the balance ideologically much more in favor of what Israelis would say were harder right points of view. They do not represent the middle ground over the long run in Israel. I've always thought that a leader in Israel who had stature and could instill confidence could lead Israel to a position of being willing to take some calculated risk for a serious peace settlement. I think that still is a formula that will have to play a role if there is to be peace. This is a Nixon in China question -- that leaders with strong Right-Wing credentials and even more with strong military credentials can be more effective, Rabin and Sharon, for example, if they are prepared to also understand as they were, that in fact there is no military solution to this problem had come to the conclusion that there has to be a negotiated solution.

One short story here might be in order. The night that Shimon Peres exchanged positions as Prime Minister with Yitzhak Shamir in the national unity government coalition -- it must have been 1987 or 88, I had the pleasure in the evening of sitting with him and two close assistants at his personal residence in Jerusalem. We discussed domestic Israeli political developments. It was a frank conversation. He was open to that kind of discussion. I said that I thought that Ben Gurion and he had contributed to a serious change in relations over time with the American Jewish community. They had evolved, you heard me say this before, that American Jews could have a voice in Israel only if they came to the country and became citizens -- made aliya. In effect they could come and vote and participate in political parties. Having profited from this for years under Labor Party governance in Israel with the attendant maxim that the Israeli government is right and has to be supported, that now they had a kind of Frankenstein on their hands. With the prospect of increasing Likud control of the government, I said I believed Labor would not receive much American support for its policies under that approach. Even more, the leadership of the American community would always tilt in a conservative direction and would

have a closer affinity with Likud than Labor -- in part because they would shy away from advocating risk taking in a peace process on the part of Israel.

The only time I saw the tradition was not followed was in the election of 1988 just before I left Israel. It was on a religious issue -- "Mi Ha Yehudi, Who is a Jew". It really turned on a dispute between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews and whether the non-Orthodox conversions would be recognized in Israel. Orthodox are the only recognized rabbis. A law making only Orthodox conversions acceptable in Israel was proposed. In the close election of 1988, to assure support from the religious parties, first Shamir and the Likud and then Peres and Labor accepted to support the law. I had warned Peres that the American community leadership would be in Israel within 24 to 48 hours to protest and change the position. After all, they were mainly Reformed Jews, and if their tradition was going to be excluded, so to speak, in this regard in Israel, they felt strongly they should act to prevent it. They did come in large numbers and after a few days were successful and both parties decided not to support the law.

*Q: Looking at this say in the next twenty, thirty years the population situation seems to be against the Israeli's and the growth of asymmetrical warfare or building weaponry and all that...to me it looks kind of problematic whether Israel can survive.*

PICKERING: At the moment most societies do live in the short term and I think we are living in the short term in the region. For the short term, some of those obvious disadvantages or potential serious disadvantages have been at least suppressed, managed or nullified in Israel. The question arises why should we undertake these uncertainties and the debate about the uncertainties which tend to magnify them and not the benefits of taking risks in the region. Why should we take these uncertainties when, in fact, everything is simply splendid? But that ignores the long-term trends that you speak of and it certainly raises the question which I think was an important question for Sharon before, in fact, he was totally incapacitated. That was could Israel under the current circumstances remain Jewish and democratic? The occupation is not a democratic feature on the landscape. There are some in Europe who have spoken out in recent weeks and said that the occupation should not be a free ride with things done under the occupation which, in fact, violate the rules of occupation under international law. These are the things that people should ask Israel to hold themselves to account about. Some Israelis do and will. "Shalom Achshav, Peace Now", a somewhat fading group, has not seen it as a permanent condition and that hard choices will have to be made

*Q: I was interviewing a lady, Ann B. Sides, who served as a visa officer in Ireland at the turn of this last century and she was Boston Irish and was surprised at how America was not very popular in Ireland because many of the Irish supported Great Britain but also our support for Israel as they equate the Israeli's and the West Bank to the British occupation or English occupation of Ireland. Tom, I was wondering whether you care to comment this not being your particular sandbox but you were in India. What about China, how do you see China?*

PICKERING: Well, I think we all have to pay a lot of attention to China. I was there for a few weeks in September and October in western China mainly, on a tourist visit. I started my first visit to China in '73 so I've seen huge changes. I think China has shown a formidable capacity for economic development. It has made serious changes in its system. One of the key questions,

of course, about China was whether in the long run -- I have to put it in two ways. Can it with all of this economic change and development, escape having that set of actions and activities have little or no influence on its governance arrangements? Can the political system remain unaffected by such economic change and progress? Are people who are economically more liberated going to want to be in the long run politically more influential or only continue to have to defer to the party? Are they going to want to have their voice felt in the political councils? The alternative way of looking at that is that in many ways you cannot achieve such a wide degree of economic success without being able to take into account what popular wishes are and how they can be expressed and articulated within the government. At the moment, the Chinese have achieved, I think, in a singular way, an enormous capacity for economic development and have done so with a relatively minimal shift in political arrangements.

Coming along with that, in addition to this question about the future of China's political governance, are other questions of corruption and criminality and all the other things that by and large grow in states with lots of money sloshing around. China will have to take into account how and deal with it. The Chinese have been quite draconian in dealing with that, but no more successful than any other states. So those issues remain out there.

Another question about China is will China become in a sense imperial as opposed to seeing itself as it has evolved as having a very strong interest in cooperation in the region? That may be more benign, expressing itself perhaps as a strong interest in the region -- not having enemies, opponents or others who could do it harm in the region -- a purely defensive posture. China has moved on this in some steps. Now China is now in a position where given its successful capacity to deal with the financial crisis, with a very large accumulation of U.S. dollars reinvested happily in the United States, and with the very large relationship with the United States based on its market interest in the U.S. which is not insignificant, China has become a major player on the world scene. Will it be in the future part of that group of nations which sees its national vocation in the world of interrelationships or of dominance? To some extent the U.S. has struggled with that problem since it emerged on the world scene following the Second World War. We have, of course, adopted facets, and attributes on both sides of the question. We like to believe in our principles, arguing against imperialism, although we have a huge overseas base structure and recently participated in at least one war of choice in the Middle East. In truth, some of that is attributable to defense of our friends and allies. We have in some ways justified the bases and indeed needed them because of our Cold War confrontation. Now, the terror problem has in some ways replaced the Cold War confrontation, but would we be happy with China having bases in Cuba or in Mexico?

*Q: Oh yes.*

PICKERING: The Chinese are looking at bases on the part of the United States in Okinawa, mainland Japan and Korea in much the same way. So we need to begin to think about those questions and how and in what way we can begin to deal with China and a Chinese role internationally. I think that we can have much to do with helping to shape the future giant in the way we formulate policies to deal with them. That's not said out of a sense of a capriciousness or an excessive view about what we can influence. We can have some positive influence, and at

least given the long term possibilities for a confrontational outcome, we should think about it and make an effort.

*Q: A tremendous number of students come to the United States.*

PICKERING: Yes, but that is not going to continue forever. We are not going to have that unique advantage. The real interesting question is, of course, those that don't agree and don't want to go back, don't go back; the largest part of them do. The really interesting question is are they essentially Chinese with a second outlook or are they happy, in fact, to have an American education, have some exposure here, see us with both our attributes and warts on, but go back and fit comfortably to China. I think the answer is the latter is probably the case so far. We are not, by educating hundreds of thousands of Chinese, creating a subversive minority in China and we should be careful not to think that we are. Over a period of time, however, in policies, those people may have a useful influence in winning in a discussion in China about what I think would be a calamity for China -trying to extend itself imperially and geographically across Asia. So far while we have seen China intervene in Korea in large measure because it was a defensive concern, and later in Vietnam after the end of the war, presumably to teach the Vietnamese a lesson of subordination -- and a not terribly successful one on that one.

*Q: No.*

PICKERING: They have stayed away from foreign military incursions; they are expanding their own idea of what their defense envelope has to be particularly in the maritime area -- the South China Sea. I think we are in a period now where China feels comfortable or let's put it this way - - uncomfortable with suppressing some of its outspoken admirals and others -- as opposed to the past where it created a single political line. There is a certain amount of letting at least some flowers bloom over on the hard right side to mix a metaphor badly.

*Q: Of course, at the same time almost in the last week China, Japan and South Korea have turned away from Russia and are getting closer together and looking to China as being the problem.*

PICKERING: Well, I think for a long time Russia has been seen, particularly in Asia, as a weakened power. It still enormous nuclear potential, but is not now seen by many as a major player, particularly in Northeast Asia. They were certainly a contender for that with the U.S. and China during the Cold War period, but the end of the Cold War, the collapse of Communism, has put Russia in terms of its policy influence in that region in a much weaker state.

*Q: I'm not going to make you tour the horizon but how about India?*

PICKERING: I think India is coming along. India has some enormous problems to overcome. It is in a hare and tortoise race with China which, I think, the Indians wanted to keep out of the public eye. India has every capability of keeping its growth rate for the next let's say five to seven years fairly high, but it's still a phenomenon where they have had a very significant growth on the basis of relatively low base. As the base gets broader and bigger, can they continue to maintain the kind of high growth rates? India has corruption problems, it has

bureaucratic problems, it has still a hangover of government management, the license raj, the London School of Economics socialism, that hasn't entirely disappeared. India has been slow in developing its infrastructure. It has been heavily based on railroads which have been slow, not inefficient, but not necessarily in the modern age. It has created a fantastic IT industry almost out of government control which has put it in the forefront of the international community in that area. But it hasn't gone nearly as rapidly as the Chinese have in constructing a national super highway system, for example, something we pay little attention to, but if you go to China you cannot help but be impressed by what they've done in say ten years. In that period they have built the Eisenhower interstate system for China. India is moving rapidly into aviation, but in energy China finishes a fossil-fuel power plant every week. India has been having trouble finding ways to make up its huge deficit in electrical production, and like China is still heavily dependent on coal and has been searching for gas and is lagging in its domestic nuclear power development. We all know that electricity is one of the major locomotives of modern development, so you can't be coming along as a highly modern state with a big lag in that area.

India is still very heavily denominated by the world as poor. China has moved much more into urban areas. India is moving to urban areas making much less provision than China for things like public housing and for the level of standard of living. India's rural poor survive, but don't do it in a way that indicates that there are positive long term upward trends for them. Education is reaching out but it's been a problem -well India has significant areas of internal disturbance, because of a lot of these factors play out, particularly in east central India where you have the so-called Maoists who are causing significant problems with the government. There are big pieces of India that I think are not under what one would call, fully centralized control, with banditry -- just being out of touch with the government still a serious problem.

*Q: One of the things that has become very clear to me as I've been doing this oral history now for about 25 years is a term that a lot of Foreign Service people don't like but I think it's typical and that is the United States is the indispensable country again and again in Africa, Latin America, elsewhere. We are the country that picks up the banner of human rights, of democracy, albeit with our own warts showing all the time. But I don't see any body else replacing that and if we were to fade in influence there might be more of a reversion to rather nasty regimes.*

PICKERING: Well I think that's right. There are still a lot of nasty regimes around. One of the questions, of course, is how successful have we been able to do it. We have a kind of noblesse oblige problem. We are committed to doing that while at the same time we obviously find it hard to take really tough and perspective looks at ourselves. I think that we are a mixture here of idealism, reality and practicality. We move back and forth across the spectrum. Indeed people look at the way the State Department is organized -- the functional bureaus carry out these efforts and are in constant contest in some places with the regional bureaus whose efforts are to persuade states to come along with us and do the things that we want. This tension is probably a significant part of our foreign relations. To some extent, the more moral questions that we espouse and take up, we don't take them all up, but we take a lot of them up, are questions that others -- having perhaps a greater affinity for the realist school of diplomacy -- see as smaller and less influential. We can do both, but not well on both at the same time -- espouse issues of principle and curry friendships with powers that don't like that approach. This is to some extent a hangover from the Cold War. Our people expect us to do this and then discount it, but

nevertheless kind of see it from time to time as being useful to them and to the points of view that they would like espouse. So it's a very mixed picture with a lot of messiness in it that's out there.

*Q: The messiness may be there but if for some reason we lost our will to do this I can't help feeling and I'm not an ideologue at all that the world would be a nastier place.*

PICKERING: We provide a lot of assistance and now we've gotten very dispersed and in some cases much less effective in doing it, and we have to be careful about that. To some extent we've put a lot of energy in it and we do best with humanitarian relief because we can see where it goes. We do less well with what I would call relief that is oriented at significant structural change and somewhere in between are things like economic development. To some extent we are not as good at this as the Scandinavians, who have money and to some extent we are more of an elephant in the china shop on some of those issues than other folks. They can afford to be selective and perhaps more effective in democracy building and economic development.

We are a state that has both the advantages and the afflictions of large size. We are in a position now in what one hopes is the aftermath of two long difficult and not very helpful conflicts in Iraq and I hope in Afghanistan to see lots of the warts. We are in a position to say are we prepared to do the hard re-examination that's necessary to try to pick up and look at these sets of questions for the coming century. We don't do this kind of examination very often and very thoroughly. We are still too much tied up in our own conviction that we are special and have a special place in the world. We don't like having the warts show, except when it comes to attacking the other party in an electoral contest. In many ways, that was the promise of the Obama administration, but that promise at this stage has not yet been fulfilled. There are lots of reasons for it. We are increasingly in an era, particularly with problems at home and with the great financial crisis to deal with, where the domestic dominates continues as it does regularly to dominate the foreign affairs interest of the U.S. That happens in a way that makes us -- put it this way -makes it harder for us to make course corrections and significant changes and to invest ourselves in a more serious way to go ahead. It's also the fact that we are stuck with two terrible tar babies that are very hard for us to walk away from.

If you had to say what are our vital national interests in these two conflicts, you'd be hard put to say these were massive issues of strategic importance, like the Second World War or even the Cold War -- that were existential. We certainly don't want to see more terrorist's attacks of a massive variety against the United States, but Afghanistan is almost now depopulated of al Qaida. They are in Pakistan and we have limits in what we can do in Pakistan. Anybody who believes that Iraq ever proposed an existential threat to the U.S. has got to be challenged. Harry Truman once said we have only two vital interests -- survival and prosperity. You could add a third -- support for allies and friends on the same two issues. The rest may be high order second rate questions, yet we have exhausted enormous amounts of time and treasure and blood on what has been from my perspective a fairly feckless and debilitating enterprise on the part of the United States in Iraq. Our sole responsibility now is not to leave it in such turmoil that it becomes a major burden for the region and beyond. I think similarly we have a question with respect to Afghanistan. What we are now hard up against is the issue of Pakistan and unfortunately we are at this point devoid of a national strategy to deal with Pakistan. In some

ironic ways we are deeply involved in Pakistan because we were in Afghanistan. In many ways one of the principal problems of Pakistan is Afghanistan. So we have a kind of circularity of issues that we haven't sorted out yet. Which priorities are we going to pursue and then how are we going to do it? We are in that wonderful U.S.-type position where we have pretended to some extent that Afghanistan is an overriding importance because we have so many troops there. That has become a kind of strategic lever for us staying there. In a way this kind of circularity which, if you read the Woodward book, we were never able to break free of, has influenced our thinking about the future of the place and how to go about it. We are struck with the imperative that getting out is probably in the long run in our heart of hearts the place where we would like to be. But the issue is of how to get out and how not to leave the place a hell of a lot worse off than we found it and how not to have it become an enormously debilitating question for a very fragile place next door in Pakistan is still bedeviling us.

*Q: Well we are winding this up; whither the Foreign Service Tom?*

PICKERING: Well my view is that the Foreign Service has a truly substantial role to perform. It has become more important as we have found that the military is not a good substitute for diplomacy. It doesn't do that very well. Bush and Chaney think that we had this wonderful military that could do all of these things and it was a wham-bam-thank-you-mam military excursion that could leave everything more splendid than when they found it. In the end, it required diplomacy and the skills and knowledge of diplomats to deal with the post conflict situation. Wars of choice are particularly difficult. We fail to look ahead and see what might be coming. For a long time I have felt that Iraq was not resolved and we were not in a position to leave it stable and even partly prosperous. The Foreign Service has also to work at the front end. To help deal with the problems that might over time lead us to where we have to use active defense, or even worse were we come to see wars of choice are again a possible solution.

*Q: Well actually Kennedy and the Green Beret's duplicated some of this earlier on.*

PICKERING: They did, although they had limitations on what they were prepared to do and I'm not prepared to say that there is no role for the military. The primary role for the military is to be there, to be as effective as possible to buttress our national diplomacy and that's a strategic asset of great consequence. Any American diplomat who contemplates being involved in negotiations, and indeed representation in a situation where we are seen to be weak and incapable, is in a very bad situation. Even after Vietnam we were not perceived as that. We will have a lot of rebuilding to do in the military, but my own feeling is that the military is not to be turned to in times and in places where our strategic interests are not directly and primordially threatened. They should not be seen as a solution to diplomatic issues, particularly if we have to involve ourselves on a large scale and in a war of choice. The military should be seen as a last and most serious resort. I think that Green Beret's and covert activities have a role. We have to be very careful not to, once again, turn to those as magic answers to the very difficult problems of diplomacy. We have a tendency, of course, in our country because of historical tradition and otherwise, to overfund those and underfund the kinds of things that diplomacy could provide us. Diplomacy is far from a perfect instrument, we all know that. It's had lots of its failures. But the ability to see ahead and to work on problems before they become the kind that end up killing large numbers of young American boys is an important aspect of what our diplomacy should be doing. If we constantly



underfund that for other priorities, we are not going to have the tools that are necessary to try to deal with those kinds of questions as well as the thousand and one other tasks. Diplomacy is a relatively cheap investment for the U.S. and there may be lots of doubts as to whether it can be useful or not, but until we make a major push in this area we can't make that conclusion.

I see diplomacy as having been most successful during the Cold War in dealing with the Soviet Union. Arms control and disarmament were aspects of this. The purpose was to create more stability and security in our and the Soviet's nuclear posture so we had less likelihood ever to have to turn to use it. At the same time, we maintained deterrence. We forget these days about how important diplomacy was in that contest. If we forget, we lose sight of the potential diplomacy offers us. The right wing of politics in America has a great tendency to underestimate what strong diplomacy can do. And it was Republicans who helped make strong use of diplomacy during the Cold War. They have also come to overestimate radically what the military option can do to solve problems. Grenada and Panama may have contributed to that kind of stereotyped thinking.

Our diplomacy however has to be backed up with a strong military, a growing economy and something we have forgotten at our peril, a set of principles and objectives that inspired our founding fathers. We recently have sought to put them on the side as impediments to our defense rather than the necessary inspiration for people all around the world who used to and I hope still admire us for honoring them

Our Foreign Service continues to attract and recruit people who have real capacities in this area. I see a lot of younger officers. I talk at the FSI from time to time and I have the opportunity of seeing the Pickering Fellow's and others and I'm impressed by their interest, their commitment, their knowledge, their willingness to devote time and effort to the Foreign Service and to diplomacy. We need to examine a lot of things that we are doing. Training and education has to get better if we are go ahead. My own feeling is that there are grave doubts in my mind as to whether spending the first three of your five years in a consular tour makes the most useful and effective investment in the high quality people we are trying to bring in. Obviously, we need a consular cone, obviously we need excellent people in the consular cone; the top of the consular cone is much narrower than the bottom in terms of the pyramid because those people who serve at the visa officer level don't stay in the consular cone in large measure. They go back to being political, economic, administrative or public diplomacy officers. I wonder whether, in fact, it might not be useful to be more selective in recruiting what one would call senior staff people for consular officers. I've had Pacific Architects and Engineers when I was in Moscow provide a significant number of consular employees. They did work that Russian locals would have done, but they also did some work up in between. Whether, in fact, some of those could be commissioned and whether, in fact, some of those could find their way, along with regularly recruited FSOs, into a future consular service is something we might look at. I don't necessary think this is an awful thing to do, but I think you wonder about it.

We haven't discussed political appointees. I have seen for years the gradual incursion of political appointees into the slots in Washington, which under the Wriston report, it was felt it was important to hold open for FSOs. They are place to serve where they could help improve policy as a result of their experience overseas. It also was important that they return to Washington

from time to time to build their knowledge and expertise to be able to rise to and be effective as senior officers. The civil service-foreign service competition is in need of repair. A definition of what each is to do is badly needed. Homogenization defeats the role and purpose of having a foreign serve chosen and trained to do the job properly.

Political Ambassadors, it has long been my view, can make useful contributions. President Kennedy did it best with a number of sterling appointments. What I think is most mistaken is in effect selling Ambassadorships for campaign contributions to bundlers or otherwise. Both parties do it. Both parties scratch each other's back on this. But sale of office is really illegal in this country and it doesn't take a supreme court to understand that is plain and simple what is going on. Al Gore, as a Senator years ago, suggested a 10% target for political appointments. We should also come out against providing those jobs for campaign contributions. Appointees should have experience and capacities to justify their service to the country.

*Q: We had a staff corps and then it went. I think there was a tendency...*

PICKERING: Well we still do, but a lot of those are IT technicians, a lot of them are communicators, a lot of them are people who provide backup in maintenance and that kind of thing. They are all very fine, but I don't know whether we have the right balance there or not. Do we lose a lot of people because of the discouragement with consular work or, in fact, do they acquire language abilities and experience and maturity that otherwise they wouldn't have? I think it is very interesting. This is only one facet and I don't want to spend an awful lot of time on it. I think that what we are now doing with our people and taking care of our people represents as much of an investment as I've seen in the Department.

One worries about the 900 positions that are separated posts. Do we have the right balance managing risk overseas and avoiding risk overseas? Is the first reaction to hardship or danger to send home wives and children? I don't know the answer to this? My view is the pendulum may have swung too far in the other direction in the aftermath of 9/11 and in the aftermath of the two conflicts we've been engaged in and we need to get out of the conflict mentality. I think we need to develop a set of ways to deal with terrorism that doesn't involve large land armies invading foreign countries. So part of this, in my view, is better intelligence, part of this is a stronger capacity to manage security, part of it may be the use of covert activities to deal with these people on their home ground. We should also try to get the kind of police cooperation that we would normally use to deal with them. In some places that won't work, so we do need to have all these tools.

But the notion that we use the sledge hammer on every issue is certainly a badly advised approach in large measure because the sledge hammer doesn't solve problems it breaks heads.

*Q: I look at the news, the media and all, and we can't help it. We are Americans and gadgets intrigue us and so we come up with a better battle tank or a better fighter plane and obviously these are almost obsolete.*

PICKERING: For the moment they are. Something may happen again and you want to have the capacity. But we moved away from a large presence in Germany with big land armies and all the

rest. I think to some extent much of our technology is going into these other areas, cyber, a lot of our technology is going into unmanned aircraft.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: A whole lot of it is going into robots to support our armies. Now whether they support Special Forces adequately and whether the technology there, night vision, intercept equipment, all of those kinds of things, IED detection, and we are pretty resilient in responding to a lot of those things. I think the big ticket, high expense items area is a problem. Certainly Bob Gates says he is not going to buy anymore F-22s. My own feeling is that we do need to have fighter aircraft, but we are beginning to look at a world where fighter aircraft are in many ways less and less important. What you really need is aircraft to carry our information gathering and to deliver munitions as accurately as possible. In an interesting way the Predator has become a much more effective system and we can control the danger of losing our own people because it is an unmanned vehicle. We have to be careful about collateral damage.

*Q: The Predator being an unmanned Drone.*

PICKERING: An unmanned observation drone which has now been equipped with missiles to attack targets that it watches and discovers.

*Q: Tom, just one last question and it is sort of a self-serving one. What do you think of the oral history program? Have you had any feel for it?*

PICKERING: Well I think that it does an enormous service. I'll now look forward to the invidious task of editing all of this stuff which I imagine is going to be a huge horror. In fact, I've gotten three hundred pages you've given me two years ago that I've looked at and done a little bit of editing on the first part; but I'll have to work on that now.

My feeling is that it's a great way to capture as much as one can the collective memory of our diplomats in sets of circumstances where they may not be around forever.

*Q: Yeah.*

PICKERING: But where they may well be able to begin to draw upon, along with their cables and the archive material, if they wish to write, which is something all of us eventually would like to do whether we ever get around to it or not with all the other things out there. I think that the enormous value of this is when you go back to the book on Nixon and Mao, the author of which (Margaret McMillan) relied on fairly heavily on this material -- and that is a reassurance.

*Q: Margaret McMillan, yeah.*

PICKERING: Margaret McMillan, who writes beautifully and is a first rate historian on this kind of material. We can add to the corpus of historical knowledge and lessons learned and indeed interesting material on critical times over a vast history. That is valuable and it provides a dimension that gives people an opportunity to look at what life was like, what were those

countries like, how did people act, what were the critical issues in a way that is absolutely irreplaceable. To some extent it may be the antidote for email in a sense that much of what goes on is in email, a lot of which perishes in one way or another and is not entirely recoverable. So the recollection doesn't fail us completely and is a good part of the story. I think everybody has to be extremely cautious that recollection tempered by age is not history.

*Q: Yes.*

PICKERING: And it is purely that -- recollection -- and it has to be measured against other data points, other factors and other pieces of information. We are all acutely aware of that and many of us have forgotten a great deal. It would be very useful if oral history could start earlier and be more frequent. Then we run up against the problems of classification, but one could also figure out maybe it could be done half way in the Department so serving officers could spend, at the end say with ambassadors at the end of each tour, a couple of days on a classified basis. There the recollection would be fresher and the material more useful and interesting and, in fact, maybe more valuable. It could be released out of the historian's office after security review and at the end totally released after a period of time.

*Q: Okay, well Tom it has been a long voyage for you.*

PICKERING: I'm going to miss these meetings. But thank you for your time and patience and all of your hard work. I can't imagine anybody who has contributed more than you have to the historical records of the period.

*Q: Well it was fun and the people were fascinating.*

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Coda and update as of September 2014.

Retirement has continued to afford me real opportunities to stay in touch, talk about and learn about foreign policy issues and hopefully to make a contribution.

I will briefly list some official duties and reflections on them. Then I will talk about outside of official activities and how they have worked for me over the period since I last retired -- the end of 2000 -- and more intensively perhaps, since my last interview near the end of 2010.

My family -- they have always been important to me and a major help and support. In what was a great tragedy for me, I suddenly lost my wife Alice on June 23, 2011 in what appears to have been a massive heart seizure while driving her car into the garage at the place where we resided. She was a mainstay of any success I have had, accompanied me everywhere, did all that she could and more than ever expected to make our joint career a success. She served in USIA before I entered the Foreign Service. She was my supporter and advisor in seven ambassadorial assignments and in other jobs as well. She was a wonderful mother to two children who are still in many ways my and her greatest accomplishments. They in turn have given us and me four grandchildren and four great grand children. When I retired from Russia in 1996, she was given

by the department a service award which was thoughtful and more than justified by all she had given to the government and people of our country.

Friends, many very close and some of longstanding have made a great difference for me since her death, as indeed have my children, grand children and great grandchildren.

I worked for The Boeing Company between January 2, 2001 and June 30, 2006. Reflections of that are contained in the interviews.

I have worked for a friend and colleague for many years since December 2006 -- Carla Hills. As a member of her consultancy firm and as Vice Chair it has been a pleasure and a privilege to do so and I am extremely grateful.

For about four years ending in 2012, I was a member of the Board of a Russian firm which manufactures pipe mainly for the oil industry. TMK, the metal pipe company (Truvnaya Metalurgiyeskaya Kompaniya) was instructive and interesting. Mr. Dmitri Pumpyanskiy, an engineer, founder, and President of the firm was a superb Chairman of the Board and an interesting and very kind and friendly individual to work for. I am indebted to an old a valued friend, Piotr Galitzine, and his wife Maria Anna for their many kindnesses and for his having suggested me for this Board. TMK has been for a number of years the largest producer of steel pipe in the world.

Shortly after I left, Anatoly Karachinsky, an old Russian friend from my days in Moscow, and a software firm leader who had worked for Boeing, asked me to follow up on an old commitment to join his Board after he had done an IPO. I did and am still a Board member of Luxoft.

On official activities I should mention that I was for a time a member of SACEUR's advisory board when General Jim Jones, USMC and former commandant of the Marine Corps, was the NATO commander.

I served for a number of years when Leon Panetta and later David Petraeus were Directors of Central Intelligence on the Directors Executive Advisory Board. Mr. Panetta asked me to join Charlie Allen, one of the most distinguished and effective long-term employees of the agency, to review the work of the special board he set up to look into the attack on and the untimely deaths of 7 agency employees at Khost in Afghanistan at the end of 2009. We joined Mr. Panetta in presenting the review to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Secretary Rice asked me to join her committee on Transitional Diplomacy which I did with pleasure and it was a special opportunity to discuss and suggest a number of ideas I had long contemplated for helping to improve the work of the Department. Later Secretary Clinton and now Secretary Kerry have asked me to serve on the Foreign Affairs Policy Board to the Secretary which I have found stimulating, interesting and I hope useful.

I am grateful to my old friend Marc Grossman as he became the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan that he asked for my thoughts and some of my time at one point during his valuable and important work in pursuing negotiating possibilities in the region.

In September of 2012 my old friend and colleague, Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, asked me on behalf of Secretary Clinton to chair the Accountability Review Board on Benghazi. I accepted immediately knowing that the job was going to be complicated by many factors not the least of which was domestic American political differences. I was deeply gratified that the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, had agreed to serve as Vice Chairman where he made a superb, thoughtful and full contribution to our report. I was grateful as well that Catherine Bertini of Syracuse University's Maxwell School, Richard Shinnick a retired FSO and former 13-year New York fireman, and Hugh Turner appointed by the Director of National Intelligence under the statute, also joined us and made their own special and important contributions to our work. The report was published on December 19, 2013 and those portions that were classified have in large measure become public knowledge since. Ambassador J Christopher Stephens, who with three other similarly committed employees lost their lives in the attack, was a colleague where he served as one of my special assistants for two years when I was under secretary. For Chris alone it was important to me to do all we could to provide a fair, well researched and informative report. We worked as a team and I am pleased that we were able to reach unanimous conclusions. I suspect our work will continue to be tested, but thus far I believe that in the most significant findings and recommendations we have produced something which can help avoid repeats of the action and improve State Department security in the future. Subsequently, in 2015, in connection with a final editing of this oral history, I maintain the same conclusions about Benghazi. If anything, the subject has gotten more involved in domestic politics which has not brought further celerity to our conclusions nor solace to Chris Stephens and the other employee's families. I suspect that will continue until we are passed the election period.

A number of outside the government activities have also occupied my time and helped to keep me thinking and hopefully providing a little useful advice from time to time.

I was asked by my old friend and colleague, Bill Luers, to join and chair the Board of the United Nations Association of the USA when he was President. That led to his asking me also to join him in a venture in which he has led us to see whether we could help open contacts and conversations with Iran. Beginning in 2002 or we started a Track II dialogue. That lasted until 2009 when it was seemingly stopped on the Iranian side by president Ahmadinejad. Subsequently, we maintained contact with individual Iranians.

When Bill left UNA/USA the project moved to its own footing and continued. Several phases and results are worth noting. All through our activities, we briefed the US government and particular State, the NSC and the agency. In about 2005 the project produced a Shanghai Communiqué-like document for both governments in Farsi and English setting out differences, areas for agreement and work for the future. A few years later we began a series of a number of articles for the New York Review of Books on how to meet the negotiating challenges that could lead to greater collaboration between the US and Iran centered around the nuclear issue. Later we produced 15-20 Op-Eds over a period of several years addressing major issues in the non-relationship with Iran. When in 2013 it began to be apparent we might slide into war because serious information about the consequences, we did a series of monographs beginning with one on the pros and cons of the use of military force against Iran. This was followed by one on

sanctions, a broader piece on negotiating possibilities and a soon to appear monograph on Iran and its neighbors.

I have been privileged to be the Chairman of the Board of the American Academy of Diplomacy for a number of years. Begun under Eliot Richardson, U. Alexis Johnson and others, it prospered under the leadership of Joe Sisco before he died. Recently it has produced a series of reports addressed to personnel of the State department, appropriate budgets, training requirements and similar questions and has in view a forthcoming report on the professionalization of the Foreign Service. In at least one important aspect the report contributed to maintaining budget commitments made by secretary Rice and carried forward by Secretary Clinton and they have been useful in bringing key members of Congress along with the meeting the needs. Its most recent report entitled "American Diplomacy at Risk" further elucidates a number of topics covered in the final discussions with Stuart Kennedy in this oral history. Secretary Kerry and his team have taken an interest in the report and we are engaged in working with them to help shape and support the Department's reaction to a wide number of questions discussed in it.

As noted in the interviews, I co-chaired with Lakhdar Brahimi, former Foreign Minister of Algeria and longtime UN jack of all trades for negotiations in the broader Middle East, three years ago a report on negotiations on Afghanistan. I am currently co-chairing a second report due out shortly on Pakistan and the many challenges it faces. Both have been sponsored by the Century Fund in New York.

I have and continue to serve on some 35-45 not for profit Boards and advisory groups. Until recently I was co-chair and later for a time chair of the International Crisis Group and remain on its Board.

I have chaired the Boards of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University and the Washington Institute for Foreign Affairs for a number of years.

Since my loss of my wife, I had the good luck and overwhelming advantage of meeting again and becoming a close partner with Ambassador (ret) Nancy Ely-Raphel, who has brought joy and happiness where I had contemplated only a long period of distress and isolation in life. We have enjoyed immensely traveling widely with friends to Sri Lanka and South India, Georgia and Armenia and Oman as well as to Russia, Europe, the Middle East and many places here in the United States also to visit friends, attend conferences and carry out speaking engagements. Seldom in life for her and for me has great loss struck with such determination -- only to be followed by a new found relationship of happiness, mutual interest, cooperation and enjoyment.

While the above notes a few highlights since retirement, it is not meant to be full or exhaustive.

*End of interview*