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AMBASSADOR JOHN D. SCANLAN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is April 29, 1996. This is an interview with John D. Scanlon. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Can we start at the beginning? When and where were you born? And tell me something about your parents.

SCANLAN: I was born in a small town in northwestern Minnesota called Thief River Falls, December 20, 1927. My mother was second generation Norwegian, 100% Norwegian in origin. My father was a second generation born in the United States Irish. So, I'm of Norwegian-Irish heritage. I grew up in Thief River Falls, graduated in 1945. The war was still on.

Q: What was your father doing?

SCANLAN: He for most of the time was a salesman in a men's clothing store.

Q: And was your mother a housewife?

SCANLAN: She had a year at the University of Minnesota, but they married very young. I think they were both 20 or something like that. She interrupted her college career to become a mother and a housewife. Her father was one of the local bankers.

Q: You went to high school where?

SCANLAN: In that town, at Lincoln High School. I graduated in early June 1945. World War II was still on. I was 17 ½, so I enlisted in the Navy and I was in boot camp when the war ended.

Q: For how long were you in the Navy?

SCANLAN: During the war, you enlisted theoretically for the duration or 6 months. All of us were out by mid or late '46. I was discharged after a little over 13 months service in August 1946.

Q: And then where?

SCANLAN: I stayed home for a year, worked various jobs in Thief River Falls. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do in college. Then the following year, 1947, I enrolled in the

University of Minnesota.

Q: You were there from when to when?

SCANLAN: I took a BA. I dropped out for almost a year. I took a BA in '52 in modern history and political science. I got very interested in Russian. In the summer of '52 after I graduated, I took an intensive course in Russian, 10 weeks of 20 hours a week. The University of Minnesota had one of the early 4 year Russian programs. I found that I had a reasonably good ear for languages, so I stayed on. Over the next 2 ½ years, I wound up with 4 years of Russian, a year of French, a year of German, intensive courses all of them, a year of Serbo-Croatian. I spent 2 summers abroad, one in Turkey and one in Yugoslavia. I took an MA in Russian area studies in 1955.

Q: What directed you towards history?

SCANLAN: I was always interested in history during my high school years. I read prolifically World War II history, 20th century history. It just interested me, European history mainly.

Q: How about Russian history?

SCANLAN: That started mainly in my college years, particularly right around my junior year. I took various courses – Russian history, Russian government, a very lengthy survey of World War II history which got deeply involved with the Russian campaign. A course in Russian geography and Russian culture. The interest grew and grew and led me to try the language.

Q: You went abroad to Turkey first?

SCANLAN: Yes. The University of Minnesota had a program called Student Project for Amity Among Nations [SPAN], which was started in 1947. Every year they selected 4 countries. It was not just the university. It was 12 other colleges in the state of Minnesota. You were selected a year ahead of time. You prepared with an advisor a topic of study. Plus the language if you didn't already have the language. And then you would go for 3 months or so in the summer, live on the economy, frequently with a family or in an institution, a school or something, and work on a study project, come back the following year, write up the project, and participate in administering the program for the next group of students. It's a very good program. You got credits for this. I applied for a group to Turkey and went to Turkey in the summer of '54. En route I spent almost 2 weeks in Yugoslavia.

Q: Yugoslavia then was pretty much…

SCANLAN: It was pretty basic. They were still very poor. Tito was beginning to become a more moderate dictator, but it was still a pretty tightly held country. I spent about 10 days there on my way to Turkey and almost a week on my way back because, frankly, I was more interested in Slavic societies than Turkey or Muslim societies. When I got back, my

Russian professor called me in and asked me if I would be the faculty advisor for a group that they had organized to go to Yugoslavia the following summer. They made me a half-time instructor so that I would technically qualify as faculty. I studied Serbo-Croatian with my group of 11 students and took them to Yugoslavia the following summer. I took the Foreign Service exam in the embassy in Belgrade in June 1955. In those days, it was given in June and you could arrange to take it at any embassy if you were going to be overseas. So, I did. I took it in Belgrade in June of '55.

Q: I took mine the year before in Frankfurt. I was in the Air Force at the time. My first post was Frankfurt.

SCANLAN: In my case, I went back eventually to be ambassador in the same building where I had taken the exam in June of '55.

Q: When you were in Yugoslavia, what did the group do? Could you describe Yugoslavia at that time?

SCANLAN: The first time I was there on my way to Turkey, I did not speak Serbo-Croatian. My Russian was already reasonably fluent. I found that in those days most Yugoslavs spoke Russian. It was an obligatory language in school. So I was able to get by in Russian.

The following year, I had 11 students. One was a graduate student. The rest were undergrads. Several of them had learned Serbo-Croatian amazingly well in a 1 year course. Some of the others just barely got by. They scattered all over the country. They all had individual projects. My mission was to help get them established and to visit each 1 of them at least twice during the summer. I think the most interesting case was an anthropologist, the graduate student, who went to Prizren, spent the entire summer there studying the role of the marketplace as a meeting place for the disparate ethnic groups in Prizren, which were pretty disparate. They had Albanian Muslims, Albanian Catholics, Serbian Orthodox, Macedonians, there was still a fairly significant Turkish population there. There were quite a few gypsies who he categorized as belonging to 3 groups. There were gypsy Muslims, gypsy Catholics, and gypsy Orthodox. He did a marvelous job of surveying all the neighborhoods. They tended to live in distinct neighborhoods, but they came together in the marketplace. In his case, I only went once. I spent a week with him there. Very, very poor, the whole country poor. But nobody was starving. Everybody seemed to have a reasonably good diet. Food was plentiful and inexpensive. Everybody was housed. You didn't see beggars. There was a basic level of life available to everyone. On a couple of occasions for minor illnesses I had to go to medical clinics. I went to one in Prizren for a minor infection. Very well organized and staffed, small, modest, but life wasn't bad. But they all were very much aware of the fact that they were living in a police state. Tito had begun to moderate his dictatorship then but it was still pretty tight. No cars. No private cars. They started the summer of '55, they signed a contract with Fiat to start producing small Fiats. But I think the statistics in '55 were something like 27,000 privately owned automobiles in the entire country. I traveled all over the country, met a lot of people. I never met anybody all summer long who owned an automobile. Most people didn't have

refrigerators or other household appliances. And there was a tremendous community living arrangement, extended families, extended friendship groups. People helped and supported one another. But they were still talking about World War II, very much so. Tremendous feelings against one another, particularly the Croatians and the Serbs.

Q: Did you go into Croatia?

SCANLAN: Yes, I did. My first stay in Zagreb, I stayed in a private home that was arranged by a Croatian I had met in a camp where we lived in pup tents south of Dubrovnik. I went down there with some students from Belgrade University and wet met some Zagrebi university students. So, when I went to Zagreb, this student arranged for me to stay in a friend's home, an apartment. One of the first things I heard from the woman that I was staying with was criticism about my language. Why would I learn such a peasant tongue like Serbian when Croatian was such a much more sophisticated tongue? I said, "My professor at the University of Minnesota was a Serb." Right away, I heard this sort of demeaning tone towards the Serbs. Earlier in Belgrade, I had heard these blood curdling tales from the Serbs about all of the Croatian atrocities, the Ustasi atrocities against the Serbs during World War II. I'm sure all of these things grow in the telling. But again, it was a generational thing. The students didn't talk this way. The students I was with from Belgrade University were very happy to be friends with students from Zagreb University and vice versa. But the World War II generation had become traumatized and were still directed against one another so to speak.

Q: Did you feel the hand of the police state at all?

SCANLAN: It was there lightly with regard for me personally… On a few occasions, I recognized that they were keeping track of my whereabouts. It depended upon where you were. For instance, when I went down to Kosovo, I took a train and wound up in Pec in the middle of the night in a hotel. I had a feeling that they knew who I was. But most of the time, no. In those days, frequently you didn't get a hotel room. You got a bed in a hotel room and there would be a stranger… Sometimes I wasn't quite sure who the stranger was. They never mixed sexes in the hotel rooms. Once in a while, I would be told that there had been a police inquiry after I had visited somebody. But that was sort of a light hand. The police state was clearly there. People were still somewhat frightened, particularly Serbs who had had a World War II record of being with Mikhailovich's forces. I had met some of them.
Q: These were the Chetniks.

SCANLAN: Yes. After the war, many of them had been imprisoned or what have you. They were very anti-communist.

Q: What were you getting about the feeling towards the Soviet Union and towards the United States?

SCANLAN: Very open, warm, friendly towards the United States. The Soviet Union, mixed. I suppose it depended upon the circles you were traveling in. I was traveling in

either student circles or in friendly family circles who did not tend to be part of the new class. Djilas' book had come out right after that. That was right at the time when Debi and Djilas were under attack by the authorities. I didn't get much of a feeling… Once in a while, somebody would speak very favorably about the Soviet Union and Soviet liberation, particularly if you met somebody who either believed in communism or was playing an official role. But I don't recall much discussion of the Soviet Union. Most people greeted me warmly as an American. One time on a train, a young military officer was rather hostile to me. But other than that…

Q: You took the exam at the embassy. I guess this was the old 3 ½ day exam?

SCANLAN: No. I think it was the first year of the 1 day exam. In '55, you had to take the language exam, but it was the first year where you didn't have to pass it. In my case, I did. I got a very high score in Russian, which probably helped me in the oral exam because they saw that. Then within another year or 2, they totally eliminated the foreign language exam. In '55, they still had it, but it was 1 day, about 8 hours.

Q: Did you have any contact with the people at the embassy at that time?

SCANLAN: Yes.

Q: What was your impression?

SCANLAN: My impression was that Ambassador Riddleburger was very highly regarded by his own staff and by Yugoslavs in general. The people in the embassy that I met – I didn't spend that much time in the embassy – 1 in particular, a young political officer named Steve Palmer, was very helpful to me. We discussed the possibility of a Foreign Service career. He had very good Serbo-Croatian. I was notified towards the end of the summer that I had passed the written exam. In the meantime, through some contacts at the university, I had been offered a Yugoslav government scholarship to spend a year studying at Belgrade University, which rather appealed to me. I went into the embassy and talked to Steve about this. He gave me some very good advice. He said, "The question is, do you really want a Foreign Service career?" I told him I thought I did. He said they had a freeze on, they hadn't taken in very many officers for the past several years, and they probably would take in a considerable number in the next 2 or 3 years to make up the deficit. He said, "It's up to you if you really want a Foreign Service career, it would probably be a good idea to go back and take the oral examination on home ground because if you wait a year, this opening may close." It was good advice. I went back and took the orals in November in St. Paul, Minnesota. Steve was the 1 person I really got to know. Other than that, I met various people. My whole group was invited to the Fourth of July party at the ambassador's residence. We went on that occasion. That's the only time I was in any embassy. But we were living on the economy. We went there, we made our own arrangements, we were not on any official exchange program. I went to the USIA library on occasion in Chikalubina, which they just closed, unfortunately. And I went to the USIA library in Zagreb. But other than that, I didn't spend that much time with embassy people.

Q: You took the Foreign Service exam in St. Paul. When was this?

SCANLAN: I got home late September and they had a traveling panel that came through in November of 1955. I took the exam in June of '55 and I was up before a panel in November '55.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions or what the panel was after when they talked to you?

SCANLAN: They asked me quite a bit about the Soviet Union, a variety of factual questions. They asked me factual questions about U.S. history, U.S. geography. They asked me what states bordered on Kentucky. I asked them if I couldn't talk about those that bordered on Minnesota. They wanted Kentucky. There was a person on the panel from the Department of Commerce who was appalled at my ignorance of international economic matters. I remember that. But I don't remember very many specific details.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service when?

SCANLAN: The process moved much more rapidly in those days. Right after the panel, they sent me out of the room and then they called me back in and offered me an appointment. I accepted. The next step was 2 things: the physical examination and the security check. I was then a Reserve officer and military intelligence army captain. I had a Russian DP interrogation team in the Reserves, which was a very nice arrangements. I had 3 Russian DPs who were students at the University of Minnesota. We met every Monday night for 2 hours and spoke Russian, which was very useful for me. That, I think, helped, since I had to have clearances for that. I think it helped with the clearance process. I got a call sometime in early February offering me an appointment in early March of 1956. But I had obligated myself to a 2 week active duty tour at Fifth Army headquarters in Chicago in March, so we agreed for April. I entered the Foreign Service on April 6, 1956. It was a very fast process. Nowadays, it takes at least twice that long. I have a son in the Foreign Service and it took him at least twice that long to go through the entire process.

Q: Could you characterize the class you came in with and some of your training?

SCANLAN: We took the A100 course, at that time a 3 month course. They split it. If you got a Washington assignment, you only did the first 6 weeks of the course, which was a general introduction to the Foreign Service without any specific consular training or anything like that. It was pretty general. A lot of senior people in the Department came over and talked to us about what the Foreign Service was, how it was organized, what the Department of State was, how it was organized. The highlight was, we took a week trip to New York. I don't think they do that now, but it was marvelous. We all flew to New York. We did a variety of things there. We went out on tugboats with the INS and people to meet oceanliners coming in, which was great fun. We observed the INS and Customs procedures on the boats as they were coming in to New York Harbor. We went out and met the Queen Mary and the Andrea Doria. A few months later, the Andrea Doria was at the bottom of the sea.

Q: I went on the Andrea Doria.

SCANLAN: Of course, there was the United Nations, Seamens' Hearing, all of these things that you might have to do overseas.

The thing that I remember best is, I had been in New York only once in my life for 1 or 2 days. So, in the evenings, we had free time. I went to see "My Fair Lady," which had only been on Broadway for a few weeks at that time. Jim Rosenthal, a friend of mine in the class, and I got orchestra seats for $7.00. I remember going out at intermission and looking at Jim and saying, "Gosh, I can't believe this is happening to a guy from Thief River Falls, Minnesota." We also saw "Damn Yankees" and then a drama called "Hatful of Rain." We went down to Greenwich Village and saw "Three Penny Opera." Both Jim and I were baseball fans and we went to Yankee Stadium and saw a baseball game. It was a great week.

But that trip helped reinforce the feeling that you were in a very special profession, that you were going to do some very important work for your country overseas. Travel in those days was… There were no jet airplanes. Communications were not as rapid. So, you felt you were going to be the extended arm of your country, which was the most important country in the world. It was a very good feeling.

But it was a 6 week course and I was assigned to the Department, to INR as a half-time Soviet analyst and half-time on Yugoslavia. Then in the fall of that year, '56, when you had the Hungarian Revolution and the Polish October, they needed another analyst on Poland, so they said, "You can read Russian and Serbian. Polish won't be too difficult for you." So they switched me to being a full-time Polish analyst. As a result, I only did the first 6 weeks of that course. About half my class went overseas and about half stayed in Washington. Then 2 years later when I was assigned to Moscow, I went back and did the second half of the A100 course, which was largely very detailed consular training, particularly in visas.

Q: On the INR side, what was your impression of what we knew about the Soviet Union when you were there?

SCANLAN: INR was a very big operation in those days. A couple of years later, a lot of their functions and assets were transferred to Langley to CIA. But in 1956 I was very impressed with the caliber of analysts in INR, with the scope of the operation. I learned techniques of gathering, collating, evaluating, and analyzing information that I had been unaware of before in my academic career, where we worked mainly from open texts that were available. It was a good operation. But it was in the throes of Wristonization, the integration of the Foreign Service. A lot of these analysts didn't want to be in the Foreign Service. They were extremely good analysts with tremendous academic credentials, but they weren't terribly interested… Some did, but most of them didn't want to go into the Foreign Service, but they were forced into it. My own view is, I think we destroyed an excellent research service because those who didn't want to go into the Foreign Service either left or transferred to CIA or something like that. I was impressed with the quality of the people and the quality of the product.

Q: What was our attitude towards the Soviet Union at that time?

SCANLAN: This was right in the middle of the Cold War. This was '56-'58. We regarded the Soviet Union as a major threat to our way of life. We regarded them in those days as capable of imperialist adventure, so to speak. This was during the period of massive nuclear buildup on both sides and lots of talk beginning about so-called "missile gap," which later on turned out to be inaccurate. There was a great concern about the possibility of some eventual conflict with the Soviet Union.

Q: Were you involved in the Hungarian revolt of '56?

SCANLAN: I was in INR at the time. That's when they did some realignment of assets. In the division I was in, Biographic Information, which dealt with analyzing cadres and leadership and movement within leadership groups and what have you, it was decided they needed to strengthen the Polish side and I was assigned to work with… At that time, they only had one Polish analyst in that division. But that was true throughout INR. They started putting more people working on Hungary and Poland. There wasn't just Hungary. That was the time when Gomulka sort of looked like he was going to become a Tito-like figure, which in retrospect was an exaggerated notion.

Q: What was the attitude in INR towards Yugoslavia? Did they feel that Tito was with us or against us?

SCANLAN: At that time, it was sort of in a transitional period. You found people on both sides who felt that Tito's break with Moscow was a hoax. They were in a minority. We found more people outside of government than in government. I remember one congressman, Representative Judd from Minnesota, was a strong advocate of that belief, but he was also very much of that mind…

Q: He was the son of missionaries and very much a Chiang Kai-shek…

SCANLAN: Very much a Chiang Kai-shek China lobby.

But within the Department, certainly within INR, they were watching Yugoslavia very carefully, but the preponderance of belief was that Tito's break with Moscow was real and that we had done the right thing in coming to his aid militarily and economically and that his heresy had given birth to the Hungarian revolution in a sense and emboldened the Poles, but we were a little bit disappointed with his behavior with regard to Hungary. Initially, they had supported the Hungarian revolution. In the end, they caved to Soviet pressure. Nadge was in their embassy, they surrendered him to the Russians, who killed him. So, there was a slight ambivalence toward Yugoslavia at that time but still a feeling that it was better to have Yugoslavia outside the Warsaw Pact than inside the Warsaw Pact. It kept the Russians off the Adriatic and probably helped keep communism from prevailing in Italy.

Q: Could you describe events in Poland? People think about October '56, the Suez crisis,

the Hungarian revolt, and Poland sort of gets ignored.

SCANLAN: It was a very important period in Polish history because by Gomulka's return to power and by sending home Marshall Rokossovsky, for instance, who was the Russian of Polish origin that the Russians had imposed upon Poland in 1948 as Minister of Defense - but not just Rokossovsky; there were dozens of high ranking other ranking Polish Russian officers who were sent home – Poland took charge of its own destiny again but remained very much a member of the Warsaw Pact. It was important from the point of view that from that point on, we were able to have something of a special relationship with Poland, which had been impossible before from the time the communists prevailed in Poland in 1947 up through '56. Poland was a very loyal member of the Warsaw Pact and you might well have dealt with Poland through Moscow. That was no longer the case after '56. Even though by '61 or so Gomulka had begun to impose a somewhat harsher regime on Poland, they had a period of flowering between '56 and '61, more or less, where the better minds in Poland were able to express themselves. We got deeply involved in that period and remained involved in very large exchange programs. The Ford Foundation went in there between '56 and '61 and brought to the USA well over 50 very carefully selected leading minds in the Polish academic world. We trained a whole school of Polish sociologists. Poland remained from that point on much more open to western influence than before or than any of the other countries in the Warsaw Pact. I can recall in the early '60s meeting a Russian sociologist who told me he had learned to read Polish in order to keep up with western sociology because everything was printed in Polish journals but not in Russian journals. So, a lot was going on in Poland. Historians will look back and say this was a momentous occasion. In '56, you had the Poznan riots.

Q: What were these?

SCANLAN: That was mainly over economic issues. A huge machinebuilding plant in Poznan called the Cegielski Works… Workers rioted, rose up. They attacked the secret party headquarters in Poznan. There were quite a few people killed on both sides. It was put down by the Polish army. That helped them keep things boiling and resulted in Gomulka coming back into power and confronting Khrushchev in October 1956. But then periodically in later years, in '68, you had student uprisings. In 1970, you had worker uprisings in Szeczin and Gdansk. Then again in '76. Then eventually Solidarity in 1980. So, I think the basis for all of this was established in October 1956 when Poland took charge even under the Polish Communist Party of its own destiny while remaining very much subservient to Moscow with regard to foreign affairs, being a member of the Warsaw Pact, and what have you. But internally, things remained at various periods pretty much in flux churning all the time, competing leadership groups, what have you, all claiming to be communists but in fact Polish nationalist communist to some extent. Stalin once said that making a communist out of a Pole is like putting a saddle on a cow.

Q: What was your impression of INR? You had been over to the highly charged, well honed Russian one. When you moved over to the Polish side, there was one analyst there.

SCANLAN: This was 1 division of INR called the Office of Biographic Information,

where we did cadre analysis, leadership analysis, tried to plot careers and what have you, and through that analyze policy directions. INR as a whole, I don't know how many people were working on Poland or on other areas within INR, the general analytical side of INR as opposed to the office I was in.

In my office, we tended to have 1 person on each of the Warsaw Pact countries except the Soviet Union, where there were about 6.

Q: Did you get the impression that all of a sudden we wanted to take a new look at Poland at this point?

SCANLAN: Yes. The Polish-American community was pushing this in late '56. They were euphoric about Gomulka. They identified Gomulka right away, erroneously as it turned out. They glorified it in a sense and they believed that that movement in Poland in October was going to continue to move in an anti-Russian, anti-communist direction, which I thought was very naive. They believed they were going to have free elections and what have you. I must say, I quickly concluded that that wasn't going to happen, that Gomulka was acceptable to the Russians because even though he was a locally produced Polish communist rather than an imposed Moscow communist, nevertheless, he was a communist, he was a true believer, and the Russians believed that he would sort of keep this thing from going any further, so they were willing to try to work with him. The Polish-American community very romantically and very emotionally thought they were going to see a continuation of a movement that would overthrow the communist regime. It didn't happen.

Q: Where you were, you were somewhat insulated from domestic politics, but did you feel the hand of the Polish-American group?

SCANLAN: I wouldn't say we were. After all, there were Polish-Americans working in the State Department. There was a sort of a euphoria at the time. The Hungarian movement was put down very quickly and very brutally. The Polish movement was not. Poland succeeded in getting rid of all the so-called Russian advisors or at least the more visible Russian advisors. Dozens of people were sent back to Moscow. There was no military. There was sort of a facedown between Russian military forces and Polish military forces that never got within firing range. There was a facedown at Okiencze Airport in Warsaw between Khrushchev and Gomulka, on which occasion Gomulka told Khrushchev, "You have a choice. You can work with me and I can keep this thing from getting out of control. Or you can start shooting and it will be out of control very rapidly." But the Polish movement then was not crushed as the Hungarian one was. Therefore, there were legitimate reasons for people who felt very strongly about Poland and very emotionally about Poland to believe that the movement would continue to grow and move in the direction of greater freedom, greater independence, whereas Gomulka's approach was quite the opposite. "Okay, it's gone this far and we'll leave it at this level for as long as we have to, but we are gradually going to reimpose our Polish police state control over things. But it will be a more benign police state than the preceding existing Russian controlled one."

In the process, Poland opened up to the west in many ways and remained open to the west in many ways, which kept the ferment alive, which wasn't true anyplace else in the Warsaw Pact. Hungary later on in the late '60s came out with a New Economic Mechanism, which curiously was an acronym of NEM, which means "no" in Hungarian. But that was purely economic. I would say even as late as the late '70s we didn't have the kind of academic and cultural and informational exchange programs with Hungary that we had had in Poland continuously from the late '50s all the way through to the '60s and '70s. This helps keep hopes, aspirations alive. It keeps people informed. It keeps people in touch with the west. And all of this stemmed from October '56.

Q: Were we keeping an eye on the Church?

SCANLAN: Yes.

Q: From what you were gathering, what was the role of the Church?

SCANLAN: We regarded Cardinal Wyszynski to be the legitimate leader of the Polish nation. He was that highly regarded. And the Polish Church was very powerful. The Polish communists would persecute them in many ways, would try to keep them from getting even more powerful, but were never able to crush them. Wyszynski was a brilliant Church leader and recognized that. We used to say that he and Gomulka would go at each other like a couple of squabbling parish priests, but Wyszynski never gave in and Gomulka never was able to crush him. We followed Church leadership as much as we could. We had better sources of information about that. Many of them traveled to the west. Many of them were imprisoned for various periods of time. Wyszynski was under house arrest for several years in the '50s. One of the things that happened in October '56 was that he was able from that point on to operate more freely.

Q: Were we getting information through the Holy See?

SCANLAN: Not to my knowledge. We probably were, but I don't recall seeing documents in our files from the Holy See. I don't think we needed it. We'd get so many reports. There was a lot of contact between American Catholic leaders and Polish Catholic leaders and a lot of Polish-Americans going there and coming back and giving us reports. We probably were, but I don't recall seeing any reports that were specifically identified as having originated in the Holy See.

Q: You finished with INR when?

SCANLAN: The spring of 1958 I was asked if I would accept an assignment to Moscow, which delighted me, as general services officer. I didn't know what a general services officer did in those days. I was told that I would be responsible for logistical support and maintenance of the embassy and embassy housing. I was delighted to be able to go to Moscow. I then went back and took the second part of the A100 course. On my own time, I did some Russian language refresher through one of the teachers at the FSI who had been

earlier at the University of Minnesota and I knew him. On his own time and my own time, we got together several hours a week. Then they gave me 2 weeks general services training and out to Moscow. I went to Moscow in mid-July 1958.

Q: You were there to when?

SCANLAN: I was there for a little over 2 years. I left in mid-late July 1960. I actually got married on June 28, 1958. We spent about a week in Washington after we got married because I couldn't get visas for my wife until she became my wife, so that was a pretty hectic week. Then we got on a plane and flew to Europe and spent about 10 days going through Europe, various stops, a hectic honeymoon on the way to Moscow.

Q: You were there from '58 to '60. What was your impression of the Soviet Union when you first arrived?

SCANLAN: Our arrival was rather unusual. We went by train from Vienna via Prague to Warsaw because I wanted to see something of that countryside but also because the embassy wanted us to escort in a shipment for the embassy commissary. In those days, we could ship anything we wanted to into Poland. Poles were very liberal in that respect. But we couldn't into Moscow. Some things we could get in; some things we couldn't. So, what we would do is, we would ship things from the Berlin commissary to Warsaw and then we would have a diplomatic traveler going into Moscow pick it up in Warsaw, go in by train, and this shipment would be in the baggage car as part of his personal effects going into Moscow. We were asked to go in via Warsaw and take in 6 tons of frozen meat for the embassy commissary. Part of that operation was, you had to observe the transfer at the border because at the border, the Polish trains were on European standard track and Russian trains were on Russian broadguage track. At the border, they would take the train off to a railroad yard where they had a system where they would jack them up and take out the Polish wheels and put in the Russian wheels. But they didn't do that with the baggage car. They just pulled up to the baggage shed, which was right near the passenger depot. On one side of the baggage shed was European gauge and the other side was Russian gauge. You had to go there and visually make sure the boxes of meat were transferred.

Well, this was right when we landed troops in Lebanon. And the Russians decided to make an issue of it. When we were in Warsaw for about 3 days, the first big demonstration was held in front of our embassy. Khrushchev was really rattling his saber and suggesting that the Russians were not going to sit back and idly watch this take place. There was actually something of a genuine war scare. So, the embassy in Warsaw asked Moscow whether we should go ahead or hold back a while. Obviously, they needed their frozen meat. They said we should go. So we got on the train in Warsaw. When we got to the border, there was no incident. I watched them transfer the meat and we got back on the train. Now we were on a Russian train going from Brest on the border to Moscow, which was an overnight ride. The Russian trains in those days had loudspeakers in each of the cabins. We had a sleeping compartment. But you couldn't turn the loudspeaker all the way off. You could reduce the volume, but you could still hear it. We were getting all of this bellicose business about mobilization of Russian troops and "Americans must take their hands off Lebanon" sort of

thing. Fortunately, my wife did not at that time understand Russian and I didn't tell her what I was hearing.

We arrived in Moscow at Belorussian Station - they had 6 or 7 stations in Moscow and this was the station that came in from the west from Poland – expecting to be met by the embassy. We were out at the end of a long platform. The Russian porters, who liked to work for the Americans because we'd give them some cigarettes and things like that, were there waiting because they knew that somebody was going to be on the train. So, we got off were there waiting because they knew that somebody was going to be on the train. So, we got off the train. We had at least 6 pieces of personal baggage and Peggy in her arrival suit with a little hat and everything. They unloaded everything, including the meat, in a pile on the platform and half a dozen Russian porters standing around waiting for the people from the embassy and nobody came from the embassy. We waited about 15 minutes and they still didn't come. So, I talked to the head porter and he said, "Don't worry. They'll be here." Another 15 minutes, they didn't come. So, I didn't know whether we were at war with Russia or not at that point. So, I said to my wife, "Why don't you stay here with our things?" I asked these guys, "Are there pay phones?" They said, "Oh, yes, there are pay phones up at the depot," which was at least 100 yards off. By this time, we were a lonely group at the end of the platform. Peggy stayed with the baggage and the porters, not terribly confident about her welfare. There were 2 pay phones. One was out of order and the other had a line of about 10 people waiting to use it. I thought, "This won't work," so I walked back again. It seemed like a week but it must have been 45 minutes to an hour before they finally came from the embassy, a sedan and a truck. In the truck were 4 Russian workers who worked for us. In the sedan there was a Russian driver. He was a building maintenance officer. I later on worked with him in GSO. A very nice but kind of excitable fellow named Ted Chariot. He got out and said, "Sorry we're late. We're having a little excitement in the embassy but don't worry about anything. Did you get the meat? Did you get the meat?" It turned out that the last traveler had somehow or other not watched the transaction at the border and they lost about 4 tons of frozen meat. He said, "Okay, you and your wife get in the car and the driver will take you back to the embassy. Don't worry about your baggage. I'll take care of that." We get into the car, the driver pulls up, pretty soon we're on the Koltso, this big 16 lane street that Stalin constructed. We get up near the embassy and I see the embassy slightly ahead of us. There must have been by that time 5,000 or more Russian demonstrators out in front of the embassy being held back by a couple hundred militiamen, including 40-50 on horseback. You could see that things had already started there. Noisy demonstration. So, I said to the driver, who didn't speak English (I remember his name was Tikho Mirov, which in Russian sort of means "quietly, peacefully")… I knew we had reservations in a hotel, so I said to him, "Mozhet' mi poyedim v gostinitzu? [Maybe it's better to go to the hotel and call the embassy]." He said, "Nyet, nyet, no, no. Everything will be alright." He just said, "Lock the doors and we'll be in the embassy soon." So, I told Peggy, "Don't worry about it. These people are here because they're told to be here. This is not a violent crowd and it'll be alright." He pulled up and lined himself up with the gate to the embassy and did a right angle turn and started nudging his car through the crowd. They started rocking the car a little bit and banging gently on the windows. Poor Peggy sort of looked at me. I said, "Don't worry. These people are not an angry crowd. They were trucked in from the factories and they're not going to do…" When we got up near the

embassy, the police finally came out and opened the lane for us. We got up to the embassy gate and there were Marines behind the gate and they opened the gates, let us in, and closed the gates. People were there and said, "Welcome to Moscow."

Then we were taken up to a fourth floor apartment. About half of our apartments in those days were in the Tchaikovsky building. We were taken up to the fourth floor apartment of my boss for lunch. In the middle of lunch, an ink bottle came through the window. We could hear the loudspeakers outside saying, "Raz, dva, tri ruki protiv ot Liban. And 1, 2, 3, hands off Lebanon!" At a certain point, they gave them ink bottles and stones and all the small boys and young men were told to fire at the embassy. They started showering us with ink bottles and stones. We moved up to the seventh floor to the DCM's apartment, where he had a television set. We were watching this process on television. Finally after a couple of hours, by that time, it had reached 80,000 people. The police said, "Okay, demonstration's over. Everybody go home." Most of the people went without any trouble, but there were some people whose adrenaline had got worked up in the frontlines. The police had to very gently push their horses into the crowd, moving them back until it was all dispersed. Something like 163 windows in our building were broken. Of course, the whole building was stained with ink. Many apartments, rugs, were stained.

Q: Wasn't that the last time they used the ink?

SCANLAN: Yes, that was the last time. That was the last time there was ever a really violent demonstration.

Q: I guess the bill came in and they…

SCANLAN: Yes, the bill came in.

Q: Which is your responsibility.

SCANLAN: People were kind of exhausted after this day. It was 6:00 or 7:00 at night by then. We were put in an embassy car and sent to the Leningradskaya Gostinitza, one of these tall Gothic style high rise buildings that they had in Moscow. About 7 of them were gathered around the city. Two of them were hotels. Here we were, first night in Moscow. We were all alone in this cavernous room they gave us in the hotel. We didn't sleep too comfortably. This was a Friday. The embassy in those days worked Saturdays. I went in. I found that we did have one empty apartment that we had just acquired in an area about 5 kilometers away, a place we called Prospekt Mira after the street, Peace Prospect. We had 20 units in that building. There were well over 100 diplomatic units that the Soviets had set up. We had about 20 where we had fixed up the apartments, linking 2, putting in our own appliances. We had 3 new small 1 bedroom apartments that we hadn't fixed up. Everything was Russian. The stove was a crummy old gas stove. The sinks… We ultimately replaced all the stuff. I said, "Could we move into an apartment? It's not very comfortable being in a hotel after that kind of arrival." So, they agreed. We didn't have much adequate furniture for it, but they took me out and showed it to me. There were no provisions for closets or drapes or anything. But we moved in enough stuff. We got some old drapes which we

tacked up on the windows and we got one of these steel framed clothes hangars on wheels, which was our closet, and we got enough other furniture to furnish the place. That was our honeymoon pad for a couple of months. We gradually improved it, of course. We ultimately moved in to one-

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

SCANLAN: Llewellyn Thompson.

Q: How did he operate?

SCANLAN: Very professionally. Rather quiet, reserved individual. But a man who instilled confidence in you immediately. The Russians respected him, among other reasons because he had been there during World War II and had gone with the Russians when they evacuated their government to Kuibeshev. It was a "He was with us during the war" sort of thing. But he was very professional. Very good Russian. I liked him. I felt it was a great honor to begin my diplomatic career working for a man like that. Of course, I was way down in the staff. There were 3 first tour officers assigned: Byron Morton, Ed Horowitz, and myself. We had all entered the Foreign Service with rather strong Russian either in my case from academic Russian; in Bryan and Ed it was both from Army language school. We had all worked in INR before going to Moscow. We had all been in a couple of years and we all had third secretary jobs.

You mentioned the bill for this. I was involved a couple days later when the people came over from the support part of the Russian foreign ministry. It was called UPDK, the administration for providing support services to the diplomatic corps. You literally couldn't buy a nail in Moscow without going through them. It was that tightly controlled. But they came over. I remember walking through with them. We ran the bill up as much as we could. It really cost them a lot of money to repair our embassy. They accepted the responsibility for doing it. It was all done.

Q: Did they ever make any comments about who the son of a bitch was that handed out the ink bottles?

SCANLAN: No, no, no.

Q: One of the interesting things would be that your job probably put you in closer contact with the Soviets than really the political officers, who were stuck with Reading Izvestia and Pravda.

SCANLAN: You're right. I didn't recognize it immediately because I got involved in a lot of mundane things that probably later on helped me out when I bought my first home. I was supervising plumbers, electricians, carpenters, the char force, painters, what have you. We had 80 housing units. I was the only Russian language speaking officer on the administrative staff. I was out on the street a lot, more than in the embassy. I was out doing customs clearance, negotiating with the UPDK, where the people didn't speak English. I

had a great opportunity to practice my Russian at very practical levels. It was great. I was out in the city more dealing with Russians at various levels. There were certain things they let us do. If we wanted to get a batch of furniture reupholstered or something like that, UPDK would say, "Fine, you can use 1 of 2 or 3 shops." They'd facilitate it and then we'd go and deal directly with people. I had some fascinating conversations on many occasions with Russians who would get to know me. It was great. From that point of view, it was marvelous. Also from the point of view of learning an awful lot about electricity, plumbing, carpentry, and what have you, which served me well several years later when we bought our first house in Falls Church and I became a harried homeowner.

Q: Did you get the feeling that UPDK was trying to give you a rough time?

SCANLAN: Yes. You could measure the state of our relations. When our relations were good, it was very easy to deal with them. We could get anything we wanted that was available. Of course, that was a measure right there. They were friendly, they were helpful, they were responsive when things were going well. When our relations were bad, when there were incidents of various kinds, it was like pulling teeth to get even the most modest type of need fulfilled. That was true in general in Moscow in those days. There were not very many tourists there. There was a very small western presence. There were no western businesses. There was a fairly sizable corps of foreign correspondents, but they were all subject to censorship. They couldn't file stories without going through censorship. And if they violated that, they would be expelled. The Russians had it very well controlled. There were fewer diplomatic missions then and they were smaller. On the one hand, there was a tight foreign community. On the other hand, there was a sense of doing something very important because you were a small presence in an alien world. The other good thing about it was, there were so few of us there that you could go to the Bolshoi Theater on a moment's notice and it probably only cost you about $1.50. What was there was available, 6 really quite good restaurants. I liked the Russian theaters because my Russian was quite good and you could go anytime you wanted to go. Now, I understand that not only does it cost $50-60 or more to go to a Bolshoi, but you maybe get to go twice in a tour or something like that. There were advantages and disadvantages to being there during the height of the Cold War.

Q: As GSO, you were part of the cadre. What was your impression of the American Russian service?

SCANLAN: I was very impressed. I felt very fortunate to be associated with those people. They were a very impressive lot. I thought my Russian was very serviceable and quite good, but I stood in awe of some that were in my view much better, including Ambassador Thompson, people like Lou Bowden, Vlad Toumanoff, Harry Barnes. And not just the language but their understanding, their knowledge, their background. They were impressive people. They helped give me the inspiration to try to measure up to what I perceived them to be doing, although in fact, I probably had the advantage of being out on the street more and out among ordinary Russians more than anyone. They traveled quite a bit. In those days when you traveled everything had to be approved by the Russians in advance. A third of the country at least was out of bounds. You couldn't go more than 50

kilometers from the center of Moscow without permission. And they would give you permission or deny it at the last minute. They made all the reservations for you, the hotels, the trains, every place you went you had to have an Intourist guide. Of course, the Intourist guide was actually KGB. They followed you.

They worked all 3 of the junior officers into travel programs. It was a fairly small embassy and you couldn't travel alone. Frequently a political officer would come to see one of us working in another section and say, "I want to take such and such a trip. I need somebody to go. Could you go with me?" You'd ask your boss if he'd let you off. I took several trips with people in the political section. One fascinating trip was with our cultural counselor, who you'd call a PAO today, when I went with him to 5 cities in Central Asia. It was the first time he got permission to visit universities in that part of the Soviet Union. We went on a 2 week trip and visited 5 Central Asian universities.

Q: What was your impression of the situation in Central Asia at that time? Was there any knowledge or interest in the United States that you found?

SCANLAN: They controlled your contact very much. We were dealing almost exclusively with English speaking university professors, mainly English departments in universities. We would always have the usual formal meeting with the rector, maybe his deputy. They'd maybe entertain us on 1 occasion or another. The only students we were able to have contact with were students of the English language. My impression at that time was that there was a great deal of segregation in education there between the Central Asians and the Russians even in the English department. We noticed this in places like Frunze (now Bishkek), in Alma-Ata (now Almaty), Samarkand… There would be a Russian language university and an Uzbek language university. There was a great deal of segregation. We also noticed that the students of English tended to be much better in the Russian universities than in the Central Asian universities. You really got the impression of the colonial presence of Russians in those countries, probably a little bit less in Uzbekistan because there weren't as many Russians there. But by and large, you got that impression that this was a colonial empire. The Russians had brought technical modernization and some other things there, but by and large, they were the colonial masters. You clearly got that impression. All the important officials seemed to be Russian. I was there last summer to visit my son who was in the embassy in Kyrgyzstan. Now it's quite the opposite, the senior officials are mostly Kyrgyz.

Q: On these trips, were you harassed at all by the KGB?

SCANLAN: There were incidents. I never was. We were clearly followed and sometimes very obviously followed even though we were assigned an Intourist guide. But the Intourist guide wouldn't be with us all the time. You'd walk around the city and be by yourself when you weren't going on official programs. But you always had a sense of being followed. Sometimes it was very obvious. One time I went with Bob Owen, a political officer, head of the internal part of the political section, to Gorky. Then we went by train from Gorky to a place called Penze. Gorky has now reverted to its own name [Nizhniy Novgorod]. In Gorky we were followed very obviously, almost humorously. They'd keep changing their

headgear. We used to call it the Comical Hats Program. The same people were following us all the time. Then we went by train to Penze. On the train we met a fellow in our compartment from Penze who was very friendly. I think he was legitimate. He invited us to his apartment in Penze, wanted us to come and visit him. He had been in the Red Army right at the end of World War II and he claimed he had met some American soldiers. He didn't speak more than a few words of English, but he remembered this experience fondly. My recollection is that he was an engineer or something. He had an apartment in the center of Penze. So, we were in Penze 2 or 3 days and we debated whether or not we should go. He hadn't set a time for us to go. He had given us the address. We were to come by in the evening to have hors d'oeuvres and a drink. Finally we decided to risk it, not for ourselves, but we didn't want to get him in trouble. We thought, "Well, he asked us. Maybe he is KGB." We went to his apartment and he and his wife received us. They were extremely nervous the whole evening. We were only there a couple of hours. They were friendly enough but they were very nervous. We concluded that the KGB had observed us on the train and had told him, "Okay, go ahead with this, but we'll be watching you and this is a black mark." But it was that controlled in those days. In 2 years, I was in 3 Russian apartments. Every situation was rather similar to that. On the other 2 cases, Russians insisted on taking me to their apartments, both in Moscow. In both cases, I said, "You probably shouldn't be doing this." I was a little nervous that it might have been a provocation. It wasn't. It was just some Russian that thought he had more freedom than he had. But it was that tight in those days.

Q: Although you weren't working the political angle, you were one of the group. What was the impression during this '58-'60 period of Khrushchev?

SCANLAN: It was a period where it looked like there was going to be an opening to better relations. In the summer of 1959, Nixon visited Moscow. We had the exchange of exhibits, the big American exhibit in Sokolniki Park in July 1959. The Soviets had a big exhibit in New York. Nixon visited Moscow. It was sort of an opening. Khrushchev's deputy went to the United States. Then there were plans made for an Eisenhower visit to Moscow which was to have taken place in June 1960. I think our initial view of Khrushchev was that he was something of a buffoon. On the other hand, he had made that famous destalinization speech to the 20th Congress. So, there was something to him. On the other hand, some of his behavior was either oafish or just bizarre in a way. He would buy on to slogans like "You can grow corn anywhere." We used to jokingly refer to him as "King Corn." Slogans like "Anywhere you can grow wheat, you can also grow corn." This slogan was widely displayed on billboards. He was trying to move Russia into being a more dynamic, more productive society. We didn't recognize right away some of the things that we now recognize, that he was maybe premature but was trying to do… It was early detente. We didn't call it "detente" at the time. He was genuine in this. But initially we regarded him as a buffoon.

Then from the summer of '59 on until the U2 in May of '60, relations warmed up considerably. We had 2 or 3 minor incidents, but by and large relations warmed up. It looked like we were going to really move forward in relations. We then regarded Khrushchev as a liberal force in the Soviet sense.

Ambassador Thompson developed a very good relationship with Khrushchev on Khrushchev's trip to the United States.

Q: Had that taken place while you were in Moscow?

SCANLAN: Yes, it took place… Nixon came to Moscow in July of 1957. Khrushchev went to the United States that fall or early in '60. Thompson accompanied him on that trip. Americans sometimes behave in strange ways. When Khrushchev went to Los Angeles, he wanted to see Hollywood and Disneyland. Hollywood… He was offended by the way they treated him in Hollywood.

Q: Spurros got up and made a big speech about-

SCANLAN: Spurros made a big speech-

Q: About making it big in America.

SCANLAN: That's right, about what he had done as a Greek. Then they had these can can dancers. Then he was told he couldn't go to Disneyland because it hadn't been in the initial plan and we couldn't guarantee security. The reporters were beginning to be beastly at that time, too. He went into a supermarket… We were kind of throwing American affluence in his face. "Look how good we've got it." There were some good moments when he was at the Garst Farm in Iowa and things like that. But Los Angeles was bad and it looked like the trip was really going to turn out badly.

It was at this point when Thompson spent a lot of time with him. They went by train from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Thompson calmed him down and worked with the mayor of San Francisco, Christopher, and got things back on track and came back to Moscow feeling that he had developed a good relationship with Khrushchev, as indeed he had. From that point on, even after U2 when there was a freeze of a month or so and the cancellation of the Eisenhower visit, as long as Thompson was in Moscow, he had a pretty good relationship with Khrushchev. As a matter of fact, later on in the '61-'62 period, when we got over the U2 thing, Thompson and his family used to go out to Khrushchev's dacha as his personal guest. We developed great respect for Khrushchev.

Q: You were there during the U2 thing.

SCANLAN: Right.

Q: Did things get tense at that point?

SCANLAN: Very much so, yes. It really hit us by surprise. It happened on May 1. There was a famous photographer for "Life Magazine" who had been assigned to Moscow a year or so before that. He and his charming wife and 2 kids lived in a suite in the National Hotel, which had a great view of Red Square, looking right into Red Square. He invited a group of

people to a May 1st party to watch the parade from his apartment. Carl Mayden was his name. Very nice person. We were among those invited. Others invited were Clifton Daniels and his wife, Margaret Truman, who were visiting Moscow at the time, and a lot of the press corps – Max Frankel, lots of others. We were fortunate to have been invited. We were all watching this thing. I was taking movies. The start of the parade was delayed for about an hour. I had a telescopic lense on my camera, one of those old 8 millimeter cameras with a turret. I had this on telescopic focused on the mausoleum when the Marshall of the Red Army came up and reported to Khrushchev and the others and they looked like they were in some sort of animated conversation. Then the parade went on.

We didn't know what had happened. We didn't find out until Saturday or Sunday. There was a meeting of the Supreme Soviets a couple days later. It was at that meeting that Khrushchev announced from the podium the shootdown of the U2. Thompson attended. I was in the embassy when he came back. He was furious. Thompson was a very calm, quiet, very well mannered person who rarely showed emotion. But I just happened to be in the elevator when he came back and he was obviously very upset. I wasn't in the meeting with him after that, but I was told that what upset him so much was the fact that Washington had not told him. He found out about that at that meeting. He was terribly embarrassed. He was subsequently called in by the Soviets and read the riot act to them. Of course, the Eisenhower visit was canceled. We had had a month of beautiful preparation. We had had a series of events, parties, we had brought in all kinds of things, including a beautiful fiberglass motor launch on a trailer which was going to be Eisenhower's gift to Khrushchev and it had on the dashboard a brass plate that said something like "From the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Nikita Sergeyevicy Khrushchev on the occasion of the former's visit to the latter in June." This brass plate was on it. Later on, we got instructions from Washington to remove the brass plate and send it back by diplomatic pouch because they didn't want to be embarrassed by having this brass plate. Then we wanted to keep the boat to use at our dacha. There was a nice little river and a small artificial lake near our dacha. We were told, "No, you have to send the boat out. Again, it could be an embarrassment to have that boat." It was under canvas. We had brought it in by air. So, we had to send it back out. I guess we sent it out by rail. Things got chilly pretty fast then after that and remained chilly for the remainder of our tour. We left in July.

Q: How did you and your wife find the social life in Moscow at this time?

SCANLAN: It was totally controlled from the Soviet side. You had very little social contact with the Soviets. You could invite 50 people and maybe 2-4 would come. And only officials would come. It was a little bit better during that honeymoon period between Khrushchev's visit to the United States and the U2. But usually either controlled official presences or cultural people who were involved in cultural exchange. We began to get invited to more things by the Russians, usually musicales or receptions in honor of cultural exchanges. Leonard Bernstein came with the New York Philharmonic. But as far as informal home entertainment, it was almost exclusively the diplomatic corps and other resident foreigners, which meant the press corps. That was your social life. But it was pretty lively, maybe sometimes too lively, with 6 or more events a week. We were never

bored.

Q: Were the Soviets into foreign students at that time?

SCANLAN: The first student exchange agreement was formalized with the Russians in the fall of 1958. I was at a reception in the DCM's apartment where this was anointed and toasted. The people who had come from Washington to negotiate it and their Soviet counterparts were there. In those days, we never said "Russian." We always said "Soviet." I remember vividly that reception. We were invited. It was kind of nice being the youngest people in the embassy because they usually invited us to anything that had to do with youth or students. It was a formal agreement. The exchange was supposed to be 20 for 20. It was a graduate student exchange. The following year, the first group of Americans came, maybe not even 20. But most of the Americans were at the University of Moscow. There were 2 or 3 that were in other places. Among those that came, we became close friends with Bill and Heidi Shinn. A year or 2 after that, Bill joined the Foreign Service and had a very good career. Unfortunately, he came down with Parkinsons and had to leave right at the time when we thought he was going to move onward and upward probably to ambassadorial level. But Bill and Heidi were in that first group of American students. They were from Minnesota. I'm from Minnesota. So we developed a good friendship then.

Q: How about foreign students? Did you get any feel of how foreign students were being treated?

SCANLAN: There were a lot of African students there. They had this Patrice Lumumba University. Some of the African students seemed to feel pleased that they were there and others seemed to feel that they weren't being treated very well. We did on occasion see some of these African students, particularly those who were unhappy and hoped that they could go to the United States instead of staying in the Soviet Union. But by and large we didn't see much of foreign students there.

Q: You left there when?

SCANLAN: In July of 1960.

Q: During a freeze period.

SCANLAN: Yes. There was one noteworthy incident even during that freeze period which was rather interesting because of something else. I was embassy duty officer sometime in mid-June, 1960. It was a Russian holiday, I think Constitution Day. I got a call from a doctor in a small town named Gzhatsk, which was out west of Moscow in the direction of Minsk and Poland, maybe 150 miles west of Moscow. This Russian doctor wanted to tell us about 2 Americans who had been in an automobile accident near Gzhatsk. He had them in his hospital. He said, "Our conditions aren't adequate to take care of them. I'm taking care of them in my office, where I can give them better treatment. They've had a lot of facial cuts, nothing serious. They're ambulatory. But couldn't you come and take them off my hands?" I said, "Well, have you spoken to Intourist?" There was no Intourist in Gzhatsk,

but they had called Intourist in Smolenski and they were entirely unresponsive. He said the Americans had been traveling by car from Warsaw to Moscow on their honeymoon and had missed a turn or come off a sharp turn or something and they had gone airborne and landed in a ditch. I said, "Well, I'll see what we can do." I didn't want to be caught in an incident of any kind. Frankly, it was one of those days when practically everyone was gone in the embassy, the ambassador, the DCM, the admin. officer. I had to make decisions on my own. I called our embassy doctor, an Air Force captain. Then I called back and talked to this guy. I had him put the American on. He put the American on and he told me what the situation was. He said, "It's pretty primitive here." He gave me his passport number. It sounded legitimate. So, we decided to give it a try. I called the foreign ministry and told them the situation, asked them to verify it. They verified it and said they would give me permission to go. Our Air Force captain, since he was a military attaché, had to go through the military channel. He got permission.

We both jumped in an embassy sedan. I drove 3 hours to Gzhatsk. We were tailed very closely all the way. We got to Gzhatsk. Talk about squalor, a miserable town, muddy red streets, wooden and log cabin houses, a few brick buildings but in bad shape. We were directed to the hospital. It was a sprawling partly wood, partly brick place. We went in and the doctor's office was decent but the rest of the building smelled of urine and stale bandages and it was really pretty bad. The doctor turned out to be a young fellow in his late 20s who spoke fairly good German. I should have said these Americans spoke reasonably good German, the man in particular. The Americans were mid-20s probably. The reason they had been going to Moscow on their honeymoon was that his parents were of Russian Jewish origin from Moscow and he wanted to go back. They didn't speak any Russian. So, we agreed to take them back, but first we had to go out on the edge of town to arrange to get their car hauled to Moscow. It was right near a collective farm office. We went into this meeting in this really modest meeting room of the collective farm with the chairman of the farm and 6 of his board members and we negotiated. It seems now improbable that you could have done it in those days but we negotiated for 1 of their trucks to take this car to Moscow at a certain price that the American had said he would pay to take it into the American embassy garage. It wasn't that badly banged up. A little sports car, a convertible. The chairman of the collective farm said he'd been out by the highway and he saw the accident. He said, "They took off like angels and landed like the devil." Then we even watched them load the car. In order to load the car, they had to angle the truck into a ditch so that the back of the truck would be at the level of the car and they pushed it up onto the truck. They took off for Moscow and we went back and picked up these 2 Americans. We got about half way to Moscow and we came across the truck by the edge of the highway. We wondered what was going on. They were washing the truck. They said, "Oh, Moscow. 100 rubles fine if you've got a dirty truck or a dirty car." We said, "You know where to take it?" They said, "Yes, the American embassy address." The whole thing worked beautifully. We took these people in. Our doctor took care of them for a couple of days and then they put them on a train back and arranged to have their car fixed up and shipped out. But remember the miserable, squalid town? Unbelievable. Shortly thereafter, the first space flight was by a man named Yuri Gagarin. I read his biography. He was born in Gzhatsk. I thought to myself, "What a contrast. This miserable, squalid town produces the first man in space." That is the contrast of Soviet society. You had all of the assets put into the military

industrial complex. They can produce things like that and they would still have in the second half of the 20th century these miserable squalid towns in European Russia, not in Central Asia. I tell this story only because of the Gagarin part. But the other part of it was interesting, too. When I wrote up the report of it, Harry Barnes, who by that time was back in Washington on the Soviet desk, wrote me a nice little note of "Congratulations. You took pretty good initiative. That was the right thing to do. But I'm amazed that they let you do it."

Q: It shows that things were… I was thinking we might stop at this point. Where did you go after?

SCANLAN: I was assigned to Polish language training. I went back for 10 months of intensive Polish. Then I went to Warsaw.

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Q: Today is September 4, 1996. You were in Polish language training from when to when?

SCANLAN: The actual training started right around late August/early September 1960. We completed it in June of '61 and then went off to Warsaw.

Q: As a result of my Serbian language training, I learned an awful lot about the Serbs from Mr. Popovich. Did you learn anything about Poland from your language teachers?

SCANLAN: We had only 1 teacher.

You mention Serbo-Croatian. I came into the Foreign Service with a 3 in Serbo-Croatian. After Moscow, I requested Yugoslavia. Instead, they sent me back for Polish language training. At that time, there were 7 or 8 people in the Serbo-Croatian course. There were about 4 of us in Polish, which was fine; I got another Slavic language. But it would have made sense to send me right away to Yugoslavia.

We had a teacher named Adam Voyna. He was our only linguist. He was very good. He had a brother, Richard Voyna, who had become a well known Yugoslav foreign correspondent, mostly in the Middle East and subsequently I got to know him somewhat in Poland because he played a rather important political role later on. He became a member of the Central Committee and something of an international press advisor to Gomulka's successor, Gierek, later on. But Adam Voyna had left. He didn't want anything to do with People's Poland. He had come to the United States, married an American after he got here. He had this job at the FSI. He was also working towards a degree in linguistics at Georgetown at that time. We learned a lot from him. He was quite recently out of Poland, had only been out 5 or 6 years. He had grown up in Poland.

Q: And well plugged in.

SCANLAN: Yes. He still was in touch with his brother. His mother was still alive and

living there. He told us a lot about Poland, so we got much more than the language from him. And we liked him. He was a very nice guy. I stayed in touch with him for several years thereafter.

Q: You arrived in Poland when?

SCANLAN: In July of 1961.

Q: You were in Poland from '61 until when?

SCANLAN: July '65. It started as a 2 year assignment and was extended.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived in 1961 in Poland?

SCANLAN: At that time, Gomulka was the party leader. They had gone through that October '56 period where Gomulka had stood up to Khrushchev in his famous meeting at Okanchi Airport. There was something of a thaw. Polish-Americans overestimated the extent of the thaw, but it was still for a communist society a relatively open society when I went there in mid-1961, but it was beginning to change. Gomulka was beginning to clamp down and beginning to assert his authority and reduce the latitude for public discussion of issues.

Q: What was your position in the embassy?

SCANLAN: I initially went in as a consular officer to do everything but visas. I did passports, citizenship, general welfare and protection, in the embassy.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SCANLAN: Jake Beam.
Q: He was a professional Foreign Service officer.

SCANLAN: Jake was very professional. He was there only my first 4 months.

Q: And then who took over?

SCANLAN: There was an interim period of a couple of months. The charge was a very fine professional, Albert Sherer, known to everybody as Bud Sherer. Then John Moors Cabot came in right around February of 1962.

Q: Was he part of the Cabots and Lodges?

SCANLAN: Yes, a very distinguished member of a distinguished Boston Brahmin family. He had had already about 4 posts, primarily Latin America, but his first chief of mission was minister to Finland back in the early '50s and he was very fond of that memory and he had become a devotee of the sauna. Then he was also ambassador to Sweden. In South

America, he had been ambassador to Colombia and Brazil. He had been Assistant Secretary for ARA.

Q: How did he operate? Obviously, you were some distance removed, but it wasn't that big an embassy.

SCANLAN: I became less removed. I had been there something like 4 months when what we would call the CAO today… In those days, USIA did not operate openly in Eastern Europe. They operated as press and culture sections of the embassy. As a result, they sometimes had State Department FSOs seconded to them because they would all be temporarily transferred as a USIA officer. So, Yale Richmond, a very experienced USIA officer and quite senior to me (he was a 3 and I was a 6), had a son who had been born in Poland. He had been there about 3 years and developed a very serious blood disease which couldn't be treated there. Yale was transferred to Vienna. They had a support office in Vienna for all of Eastern Europe. USIA could not replace him immediately. It was a key job. At that point, one of our main points of contact with Polish people was the cultural officer, the cultural attaché. He was out all the time on the street meeting with cultural personalities, academics, what have you. The atmosphere for that was very open at that time and we had a rapidly expanding exchange program. They looked around the embassy at who could temporarily fill this job. I had come out of the FSI with 4/4 Polish.

Q: That is as fluent as a non-native speaker can get.

SCANLAN: When I left Poland 4 years later, I got a 4/4+. That is a higher degree of fluency. But 4/4 is a good level of fluency. You can operate quite effectively in almost any milieu.

So, I had good Polish, plus the fact that I had done some work in Moscow in a USIA press and culture section there which was badly understaffed, so from time to time they coopted me. They worked it out with Sherer, the charge (Bean had left). It was supposed to be a temporary assignment of 6 months. But I wound up staying in that position for almost 3 years. Then my last 6 months there, I was acting political section chief. So, I moved out of the consular section after 4 months. Frankly, I had enjoyed the job in the consular section because I was doing all the general consular work, which took me out on the street.

Q: What were some of the main things that you found yourself involved in?

SCANLAN: I took all the applications for American citizenship.

Q: Which must have been quite a few.

SCANLAN: There were a lot. Then you did the initial adjudication and sent them back to Washington for final adjudication. That was a quite interesting job because there were a lot of people who had under the complicated citizenship law a claim to American citizenship. Many of them were quite elderly people, frequently even illiterate, but they had heard about this program, so they'd come in. It was painful to watch many of them sign their

signatures with an X. But that was an active program.

This was still a fairly liberal period in Poland. As I said, Gomulka was beginning to tighten up, but it was open. You had a lot of Polish-Americans coming back, including a lot of people who had left after the war or had been in Anders Army and hadn't come back.

Q: Anders Army being an army that fought with the allies.

SCANLAN: Yes. Based primarily in Britain, but they participated very heavily in a lot of major battles in Italy and Normandy and what have you. This got interesting because on several occasions they would be harassed by the local authorities, even arrested and passports confiscated. Most of them were smart enough to make a beeline for the embassy as soon as they could. Since I was doing welfare and protection, this fell to me. There were some very interesting cases. You had a chance to represent them with the Polish authorities. On a couple of occasions, I issued people new passports. They would report back with a passport and a letter from the American vice consul saying that they enjoyed the full protection of the American government. And it worked. They would come back smiling and telling me that the local authorities had been very upset. But it worked. I can remember going to a court trail of an American, a Church of Christ sponsored Polish minister. He was accused of conducting an illegal church. That was a rather heavy court trial. But the judge was very fair. This guy had very affluent friends in Texas. You get involved in that. It was an interesting job. It was one of the more interesting jobs in the embassy.

Q: Did you run across any American tourists, maybe non-Polish connected, who were wandering around and getting into trouble?

SCANLAN: No, I don't remember any specific cases of that kind. I remember many post-World War II Polish immigrants coming back and having various problems. We had death cases, too.

Q: I was in Germany in the '50s. We had German-Americans coming back and going to the local village where they came from and lording it over the people there. "In America, we do it this way, you stupid people." There was like a nouveau riche in a way. Did you have problems with this?

SCANLAN: We never had any problems with it, but it was a quite frequent occurrence where a Pole would come back and he'd go to his village. In America, he might not be terribly affluent, but in terms of that village, he was the richest person they had ever seen. But I don't recall friction there. I recall putting on banquets. And occasional death cases. These people would be in their '70s or so and they'd live it up and boom, we'd get a call from the village saying, "We have a deceased American." That happened a few times.

I think Poles would react different than Germans anyway. Poles always had the view that America was the great promised land. They had no antagonism toward America. We had never been on opposite sides in a war. The Polish people always felt, "Boy, if I could only get to America, where the streets are paved with gold." You couldn't say anything… By

and large, I found this throughout my term, except for high level communist officials who were giving the Party line, that you couldn't criticize America to a Pole. They thought America could do no wrong.

Q: How did you find dealing with the ministry of interior? Did you find them responsive?

SCANLAN: Yes. At that time, by and large, the relationship was pretty good. I never felt that I had any problems gaining access to any official that I needed to see or gaining access to any premise that I needed to be on. It was relatively open then. But it did get a lot tougher late on.

Q: Moving to the time when you were the cultural officer, what did you see as your task and how did you go about it?

SCANLAN: We saw as our task keeping Polish intellectuals, academics, cultural figures, students in contact with their American counterparts, in contact with American society, keeping their spirits up. We had a very rapidly expanding program. Within certain reasonable limits, we could get pretty much the funding we needed. At that point, CU was in the State Department. We had 2 masters. We went to the Office of Cultural Affairs in the State Department for funding for exchange programs and cultural performing arts programs and things like that. We went to USIA for information programs. But USIA got involved on the cultural side with periodicals, contributing to performing arts exhibits. We had a lot going on there. We expanded from 2 American professors of American literature in 2 Polish universities to 5 by the time I left. There were no undergraduate exchanges then, but graduate exchanges of students went from 6 when I started to about 40 in several different programs by the time I left. But there was an awful lot of ad hoc private sector exchange going on with students and professors, a tremendous amount of cultural contact, performing arts groups, an awful lot of activity, both planned program and targets of opportunity. We would see an opportunity to get somebody who was in Western Europe and bring them in. By and large, the Poles normally went along with it. We funded everything, of course. So, in a sense, it was to keep the Poles pointed towards America, the future. Later on, after Reagan made his famous speech, we can look back and say what we were doing was undermining the Evil Empire.

Q: What was the role of the Polish intellectual in Poland? Intellectuals play different roles in each country.

SCANLAN: Many of them - probably most of them - were trying to remain as independent of the Polish system as they could, which was a communist system. But a different communist system, from the Soviet system, probably the most open at that time of all of the Warsaw Pact countries. Polish intellectuals saw their role as keeping Polish culture, Polish intellectual pursuit, the Polish academic pursuit, alive during a difficult period. They looked back to the 19th century when this had been done before in Poland. Poland was partitioned between Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia, 3 partitions at the end of the 18th century leading to the disappearance of Poland as a sovereign nation. But during that period, Polish intellectuals, Polish cultural figures, kept the Polish spirit

and the Polish culture alive. You have people – Chopin during that period. You had Sienkiewich, who became a Nobel laureate in literature. And many others. They looked historically to the 19th century and were trying to do pretty much the same thing in the 20th century, with some success.

Q: Did we have the equivalent to "Amerika" in the Soviet Union?

SCANLAN: We did. It was the second one. The first was the Russian one and the second one was the Polish one. In the case of Poland, it circulated very freely. In Russia, we always had problems. You had to distribute it through their distribution agency and they would return half of them and say they hadn't sold. We never had that problem in Poland. They were extremely popular. Used copies of them would sell in the used bookstores. The American magazine in Poland was very effective.

Q: As we worked in cultural affairs, did we see our goal as to talk about America or were we aiming at showing how lousy the Soviet system was?

SCANLAN: We saw our role as presenting a positive picture of America, not a negative picture of the Soviet Union. That would have caused us problems with the local authorities. We didn't demean the Soviets.

One little anecdote on that subject. In October 1964 it was the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Polish People's Republic. During World War II when the Red Army liberated eastern Poland, in a city called Lublin, they found something called the Lublin Committee, which was the precursor to the Polish communist government. They had a 20th anniversary celebration. Khrushchev came to town. All of the communist Warsaw Pact leaders came. I can recall the crowds in front of our embassy. While they were waiting… There were police lines, but they weren't stopping people from coming into our embassy, so a lot of them saw this as an opportunity and they came in asking for copies of "Amerika" magazine. Here was the Russian leader coming by. I got a couple of the local employees and we went down into our storage room and we did have a few hundred copies of back issues of "Amerika" and we brought those out. When they ran out, the guys came to me and said, "What should we do?" I suddenly remembered that we had over 2,000 copies of the special issue of "Life Magazine," an issue relating to the greatness of America, which we hadn't been able to distribute. We got them for practically nothing, 10 cents a copy or something. Then the Poles hadn't permitted us to distribute them because shortly before that "Life" had done an interview with Gomulka that he had not liked. I said, "Go get those 'Life' magazines." They brought up the 2,000 copies of "Life Magazine" and we were out in front of the embassy distributing them. Here it was, the Poles voting for American magazines and American culture as Khrushchev is coming by. When the little parade came by, he was in a convertible. We had a very modern looking building. He was in the car with Gomulka and you could see him looking at our building and then turn back to Gomulka. I'm sure he said, "What building is that" and Gomulka said, "It's the American embassy." You see him looking back again sharply. I have that on an 8 millimeter film. We didn't openly attack the Russians. All we did was support all cultural activities that helped the Poles stay in touch with America.

We had a big English teaching program, too, not directly but in support of Polish English teaching. We brought in all the best linguists we could find and put on special programs and seminars.

Q: The Poles also turned out some really first rate linguists, didn't they?

SCANLAN: Yes.

Q: It seemed to be a specialty of theirs.

SCANLAN: Linguists, mathematical logic was another specialty there. They had some wonderful scholars and they maintained the level of scholarship during that period.

Q: What about your dealings with the Poles in your field as cultural attaché on what they were saying about the Russians? One does not think that this is a love relationship.

SCANLAN: In their official capacity, many of them, including some of the academics and people who had official positions in some cultural organization, would be very careful in their official relations with you. But in private, they would let their hair down and tell you what they thought about the Russians and what they thought about communism. There was no dearth ever of anti-Russian jokes. The typical joke in Poland in those days was anti-Russian, not just anti-communism. They belittled the Russians constantly.

Q: Were you aware of what the Soviets were trying to do to counter this to make the Poles love the Soviet Union and communism?

SCANLAN: They were there in a pro-consul relationship. They had a huge embassy. They had a cultural center there. The Poles didn't pay that much attention to it. There was an obligatory year of Russian language training in high schools and colleges, but the Poles didn't pay much attention to that. They went for English. The Soviets had their magazines just like we had ours. One had the impression that they were content to maintain their control at the official level, which they did. I can recall Russian diplomats telling me that the relationship was more party to party. I had conversations with Russian diplomats and would say… I spent a lot of time at the ministry of foreign affairs, the ministry of culture, ministry of higher education working on details of programs, getting approval for them. I remember one specific occasion where I had a rather good conversation with a Russian diplomat. He said somewhat derisorily, "Our relationship is party to party." We did not have that relationship. We rarely even had any contact with party officials. For the Russians, that's how they exercised their control, party to party and military to military. We had no relationship whatsoever with the military either.

Q: How did we feel about Poland at that time as a Warsaw Pact ally? How dependable was it felt to be?

SCANLAN: Most of us believed that Poland would not be a dependable ally in any

offensive action, that in an offensive action the Russians probably would have to just keep an eye on the Poles. In a defensive mode, it might be different. The outcome might be a little different. But even there we felt the Poles were probably the least reliable Warsaw Pact allies. They had the largest army because they were the largest country. And they had a strong military tradition. Particularly after '56… Gomulka sent a lot of the Russians home. Up until '56, most of the senior military control positions in Poland were either Russian officers or Russian Poles, including Marshall Rokossovsky, the famous one.

Q: How did Ambassador Cabot relate with the Polish authorities?

SCANLAN: Cabot was a very traditional diplomat, very correct. His experience had been entirely with the non-communist world up until then. His relationship with Polish authorities was very formal, very correct. He did develop a rather decent relationship with the foreign minister, Adam Rapatski, who spoke excellent French. Cabot didn't speak Polish, but he spoke very good French. Rapatski was one of the few genuine intellectuals in the Polish government. He was pre-war educated. He had been a socialist, not a communist, and when they coopted the entire Socialist Party in the late '40s he was a respected figure, who incidentally later on in August 1968 resigned when the Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia. He resigned on that issue. Rapatski under the circumstances was a relatively decent guy. Cabot developed a rather decent official relationship with him and with his deputy, Jozev, who was also a pre-war educated Wieniewicz socialist. He spoke very good English. His relationship was on that level plus the fact that both he and Mrs. Cabot were very interested in art and in music, so he enjoyed very much when we would have a performing arts group and played his role as ceremonial ambassador very well. He did not ever get down very deeply into the political intricacies and complexities of Polish political and social society because he just didn't have the background for it. But he was very good to work for. He would solicit the views of staff. He would accept views. There were occasions when I thought he was a little skeptical about some of the programs that I thought we ought to get involved in, but he would always support you. I enjoyed working for him. He was a Boston Brahmin and at times could be very formal in the old school sense. But a very decent human bring. And Mrs. Cabot was delightful.

Q: Were there any exchange programs of opera or jazz?

SCANLAN: Yes, we got very much involved in jazz. The Poles had developed some pretty good jazz musicians and the people that we were dealing with in cultural exchanges did not want to acknowledge jazz as anything worthy of cultural attention. In the summer of 1962 there was a major jazz festival in Washington called the Washington Jazz Festival. I leaned very heavily on the people I dealt with particularly at the cultural section of the foreign ministry to agree to let us send a very good Polish jazz combo, 5 of them, to Washington for the festival. They reluctantly agreed. They were led by a very good fellow, Andziej Czoczowski. At any rate, they were good. They came here and some of the officers who had just left Warsaw and were back in the Department arranged for them to give a jazz concert in the courtyard of the State Department. They also were very successful at the jazz festival. After they became a hit, the very people I had been dealing with in the ministry of culture and the ministry of foreign affairs who kind of turned their nose up said, "You see,

we have such wonderful people." From that point on, we developed a very good relationship. There was a very good Polish jazz festival every year. They had a jazz magazine that was very good. We sent a lot of their people to the States. We brought people there. Ella Fitzgerald came under our auspices and put on a very successful concert at their huge congress hall. So, we developed a very good relationship and supported the development of Polish jazz.

Q: In these programs, what was our ultimate objective?

SCANLAN: It was defined very well by Ronald Reagan later on. We were undermining the Polish communist system by keeping creative Poles in touch with cultural developments in the United States, keeping them informed. This was the period when the Soviets were trying to keep information out of the Soviet Union and to some extent out of Eastern Europe. They were not that successful with regard to Eastern Europe. They spent more money jamming the Voice of America than we spent broadcasting. You can hear the jammers even in Poland. But Radio Free Europe got through even though the Poles had a jamming program, too. VOA did. We were getting information into Poland and through Poland into the Soviet Union. It was a very successful program in many ways. For instance, we sent so many Polish scholars of sociology to the U.S. in the late '50s and early '60s under a Ford Foundation program and under other programs that we helped develop a very good school of Polish sociology. They put out a quarterly publication on sociology which was excellent. I recall being told by some of these Polish sociologists that their Soviet colleagues told them that they had to learn to read Polish. They could get the Polish quarterlies. They couldn't get the American quarterlies. We had the Cuban Missile Crisis while we were in Poland. Khrushchev was overthrown and ousted in the Soviet Union in October 1964 and replaced by tougher minded people, Brezhnev and Kosygin. We had the beginning of the Vietnam War in February of 1965 and that chilled the atmosphere even in Poland. This was not an easy period of relations. Poland was sort of a window. People have to remember that geographically Poland was the only East European Warsaw Pact country surrounded entirely by other communist Warsaw Pact countries. It had a seacoast, but otherwise its neighbors were all Warsaw Pact communist countries. This wasn't true of any of the other Eastern European countries. And yet Poland was our principal window into the Warsaw Pact for cultural influence and information because of the nature of Polish society and because we had the wit to try and exploit that.

Q: I would think that one of the greatest tasks that you might have been faced with was the death of President Kennedy. Were you there?

SCANLAN: Yes. John Steinbeck was there at the time. He had been at that famous dinner at the White House with all the Nobel laureates where Kennedy said this was the greatest collection of wisdom at dinner since Thomas Jefferson dined alone. In any case, Steinbeck on that occasion was approached by Kennedy to go to Eastern Europe. He went to 3 countries, Yugoslavia also. I had been his escort in Poland most of the time including the day that Kennedy was shot. We went down to Lodz. He had been in western Poland, where he had been taken care of by our Poznan consulate staff. Then they delivered him to Lodz, the second largest city in Poland. There was a university there and he was going to speak to

the American literature program students. We were there with him for that. They gave a dinner for him. Then we drove him back to Warsaw. He was with his wife, Elaine, and we were in my car. My wife was there. He was kind of tired. He had been in Poland for a week and had had programs every day. He didn't want to do anything that evening. We said, "Would you like to come back to our house and have just a simple spaghetti dinner?" He said, "That would be wonderful. I've had all this heavy Polish food." So we had a nice, quick spaghetti dinner at our house. Then I took him to his hotel. I dropped by the embassy then because I had been gone all day. It was about 8:00 PM. I walked into the embassy and went back to the press and culture section and saw the press officer, Phil Arnold, working with the ticker. He said, "Jack, President Kennedy's been shot." We didn't have rapid communications in those days. So, we were getting a report on VOA. I said, "I'd better tell Steinbeck." I called the hotel and the maid on their floor had just told them but they had nothing further. So, I said, "Well, I'll come by and bring a portable radio." "Yes, please do that. I'm very concerned." So, I dropped by my home first to tell my wife what was going on. While I was home briefly, the desk officer, the second or third guy on the Polish American desk in the foreign ministry, came to my door to express his condolences and his personal grief. This guy was a communist official from the foreign ministry, a very nice guy. Unfortunately, he died fairly young, Andzey Wojtowicz. He was later posted in Washington and was quite popular here as a Polish diplomat. That was the nature of the society. The Poles took this almost as a personal loss. So, I went back to the hotel. Steinbeck was in his pyjamas and bathrobe and Elaine was there, very upset by this. We didn't know what had happened, who had shot him. It was a horrible feeling. We were cut off from the world, listening on VOA and static and what have you. We were getting the reports. Elaine was from Texas and was a personal friend of John Commely, who was also shot. They had been in Texas just before coming on this trip and had heard all of this violently anti-Kennedy stuff from some of the wealthy Texans. I think Steinbeck at that point was almost prepared to believe that this could have been a plot by some of these violently anti-Kennedy Texans.

Q: When I first heard this, this was my reaction.

SCANLAN: That they were wildly fanatically conservative anti-Kennedy people.

Q: Particularly in Dallas.

SCANLAN: Yes.

Anyway, he was very upset. Then he said, "Well, please cancel all social events, but I will go forward with the official program. He would have wanted me to do this. I came at his request and I will finish that part." He had a meeting the following morning. He was to speak to university students. We expected an audience of well over 100 students of English. This was a major field. We kept listening to the radio until almost midnight and then as I left, he said, "On your way to pick me up for that meeting at the university, would you see if you could get me a black armband?" Well, it wasn't exactly a free society. But there were private shops. He was to be at the university at 10:00. The next morning, I'm down on a street of private shops looking for a black tie for myself and a black armband for him. I

found a little tailor shop and told the tailor who I was and what I wanted. He made a black armband for me very quickly. I took it back and gave it to John. He wore it and we both wore the black ties. He spoke to the students, a very hushed audience, at the university. There were more people there than I expected, almost 200. I think they went way beyond the English faculty. That was the way we experienced Kennedy's death.

Q: In Belgrade, we were-

SCANLAN: It was not only large but a very sympathetic audience. The Poles in general behaved in a very sympathetic manner. They had a memorial mass at the cathedral which the entire embassy staff attended. We had a picture display out in front of the embassy and they just came by the hundreds and put candles in front of the pictures.

Q: It was a very emotional time.

Why don't we stop at this point? Before we leave the '64/'65 period, let's talk about the crackdown, when things started getting tougher, and how that affected your work as a cultural attaché. Also for the time that you were in charge of the political section.

SCANLAN: Okay. That didn't start… It was an incremental tightening of the internal political situation in Poland. But the real crackdown… I'm not sure I'd call it a "crackdown." It didn't take that form. Up until the end of the Gomulka era, it was a steady tightening. He who had been the hero of October '56 by the time he was ousted by Gierek in December of '71, he had few faithful followers and had lost all the credibility.

Q: Next time, we will talk about the effects of the gradual process during the time you were there and also what you were getting from the country team and from your own views about Gomulka, and then about your time as political counselor, how the political section operated in this difficult environment.

SCANLAN: The people who were fighting this tightening of the internal political situation were on the cultural side, the intellectuals. The writers union was one of the main battle groups during the mid-'60s.

Q: Also with the Catholic Church and its role in this at that time. And any reflections on Polish anti-Semitism that you saw.

SCANLAN: Yes, we should talk about Bobby Kennedy's visit in June of 1964 and the role of Cardinal Wyszynski, who played a major political role in Poland.

End of interview