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

AMBASSADOR THOMAS W. SIMONS JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: July 22, 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Goals of Kennedy Round
Trade wars
National styles of negotiation
Operations
British
French
Canadians
Japanese
Treaty accomplishments

Warsaw, Poland: Consular Officer/Political Officer 1967-1971
Ambassador Walter Stoessel
Visa fraud
Bilateral Relations
Jewish exodus
Political environment
Communist bloc national antipathies
Invasion of Czechoslovakia - 1968
Katz-Suchy visa case
Soviet influence
Senator Sparkman delegation
Exchange program
Catholic organizations/PAX
Leszek Kolakowski
Economic reform
Polish working class
Czech/ German relations
Oder-Neisse border
Gomulka
Gierek
Polish army
"Sonnenfeldt Doctrine"
Poland-West Germany treaty - 1970
Price Rises
Workers' Revolt – December 1970
Cardinal Wyszynski
Catholic Church
Solidarity
Polish-American community
Moczar in Olsztyn

Hoover Institution; Council on Foreign Affairs Fellowship 1971-1972
Stanford and Berkeley (U. of C.) campuses
Stanford environment
Course of study
Herbert Hoover

East European/Soviet economic structures and policies
Loss of communist ideology appeal

Warsaw, Poland: Scribe at US-China talks 1969-1971
Soviet Union/China friction
Ussuri River Clashes - 1969
Nixon Chinese efforts
Ambassador Walter Stoessel
US-China talks in Warsaw

State Department: Political-Military Affairs: Office of Disarmament and Communist Affairs (DCA) 1972-1974
ABM Treaty and SALT I Interim Agreement
"Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions" in Europe (MFBR) and "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)
Mansfield Amendment
Pol-Mil Bureau personnel changes
Senator Henry Jackson
European sensitivities
Jonathan (Jock) Dean
Donald Rumsfeld

State Department: Policy Planning Staff 1974
Winston Lord
US views of Soviet military capacity
Averell Harriman
Jackson ant-détente constituency
World food crisis
Human Rights
Helsinki Agreement
Jackson-Vanik Amendment
East Europe Policy
Ceausescu visit
Gierek visit to Washington - 1974

State Department: Foreign Service Institute (FSI); Russian language study 1975
Comments on instruction

Moscow: USSR; Political Officer, External Reporting 1975-1977
Ambassador Walter Stoessel
Embassy officer personnel
Détente
Economy
Local contacts
Police regime

Dissidents
Helsinki Final Act
World wide issues
Africa
National Liberation Movements
Brezhnev – the Soviet Leadership
Soviet views of Carter
Operation Verona
Embassy microwaving
Georgiy Arbatov
Embassy views of Soviet power
Daughter's Russian schooling
Visits outside Moscow
Final comments on Soviet society and government
Ambassador Malcolm Toon

State Department: Foreign Service Institute: Romanian language training — 1977

Bucharest, Romania: Deputy Chief of Mission — 1977-1979
Country history and geography
Economy
Bilateral Relations
Romanian Party
Mr. and Mrs.Ceausescu
Most-Favored-Nation tariff treatment
Ambassador Harry Barnes
Ambassador Rudolph Aggrey
Industrialization
Dacia cars
Jewish community
Information sources
Intellectual life
Dissidents
Cultural life
Soviet-Romanian relations
Bessarabia
Relations with neighbors
Transylvania
Hungarian minority
Kiraly
Human Rights
Israelis
Police presence

London, England: Political Counselor — 1979-1981

Ambassador Kingman Brewster
Operations
Dealing with the British
Embassy size
Embassy morale
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
Afghanistan Invasion
British views of Reagan
General operations
Labour Party
British class society
Social Democrats
Working with Foreign Office
Henry Kissinger Visits: Joan Auten
Ambassador John Jeffrey Lewis
Anglo-American relations

State Department: Director, Office of Soviet Affairs 1981-1985
Secretary of State Al Haig
President Reagan advisors and policies
European gas pipeline
Détente balance
Divergent views on détente and arms control
Reagan reluctance to adjudicate
Intelligence
Paul Nitze
Soviet strength and weakness
Missiles
First Gromyko meeting - 1981
SALT/START Agreements
European views of disarmament
Poland crisis - 1981
Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) "Zero Option" Proposal
Reagan Eureka College speech – Ballistic Missile 50% Reduction Proposal
Reagan style
Reagan/Gorbachev
Haig resignation
Korean Airlines Flight KAL 007
Brezhnev death
Secretary Shultz
Williamsburg Summit
Richard Pipes
National Security Decision Directive (NSDD-75)
Soviet Regime Change principle
Policy and ideology
Richard Burt

Human Rights
Nicaragua
Nitze's "Walk In The Woods"
Anatoliy/Natan Sharansky
Yuri Andropov
Soviet arms to Syria
Reagan-Dobrynin meeting – Feb. 1983
Pentecostal families
Star Wars
US-Soviet negotiations
Judge Bill Clark
Opening Consulates agreement
Arms control negotiations halted
Reagan/Gromyko meeting - 1984
Major Nicholson shooting
Vice President Bush/Gorbachev meeting – March 1985
Pacific Air Safety Agreement

State Department Senior Seminar 1985-1986

State Department: Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs 1986-1989

Ukrainian seaman defection
Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) – Star Wars
Note-Taker: Reagan/Gorbachev meeting at Reykjavik – October 1986
Soviet Union decline
Predictions re Soviet Union collapse
Reagan/Gorbachev Summits (1987 and 1988)
Don Oberdorfer
Governors Island meeting - 1988
Shevardnadze
Arms control negotiations
Regan Helsinki Speech CSCE - 1988
Vice President George Bush
Policy reviews for incoming Bush administration
Poland – 1986-1989
Lifting sanctions
Bush visit - 1987
Politics, Economics, Round Table
Lech Walesa
US East Europe policy
Hamtramck Speech - 1989
General/President Wojciech Jaruzelski
Yugoslavia
Ambassador John D. Scanlan
Serbian nationalism

Croatia

Brown University: Adjunct Professor of History 1989-1990

United States Ambassador to Poland 1990-1993
- New Solidarity government under Mazowiecki
- Economic reform
- Elections
- Lech Walesa becomes President - 1990
- Dealing with ex-Communists
- Polish Catholic Church
- Pope John Paul II
- Soviet relations: troop withdrawals
- Kaczynski brothers
- Bob Zoellick visit - 1992
- Social services
- Reagan visit - 1990
- US and Poland: popularity, assistance, debt forgiveness
- Relations with West Germany: Border issues
- Willy Brandt's Warsaw visit - 1970
- NATO membership
- Leszek Balcerowicz
- Embassy staff increases
- George Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen
- Availability of products
- Polish Diaspora
- Polish Army
- Gulf War
- Polish assistance in Baghdad
- Intellectuals
- Judiciary
- Nationalism
- Anti-Semitism

State Department: Coordinator of U.S. Bilateral Assistance 1993-1995
To the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union
- Strobe Talbott
- Humanitarian Assistance
- Personnel and Program: Fab 5
- Congressional support
- Kyrgyzstan
- Armenia; Armenian diaspora in US
- Georgia
- Turkmenistan
- Tajikistan
- Nunn-Lugar Program

Intellectuals
George Soros
SAIC
USAID managed programs
Area leaders: Karimov, Akayev
Boris Yeltsin
Vladimir Zhirinovsky
Russia 1993 elections
Fired and Seeking successor – 1994-1995
Trade and Investment
Oversees Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)
Moldova
Aga Khan Foundation
Richard Morningstar

United States Ambassador to Pakistan 1996-1998
Frank Wisner
Kashmir
Covert nuclear weapons program
Afghanistan War
Islamist threat
CIA Hqrs. Shooting (by Mir Aimal Kansi)
Father's past assignment in Pakistan
Pressler Amendment
Ambassador Robert (Bob) Oakley
Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto - 1994
Benazir meeting with President Clinton
India as counterweight to China: Wisner/Simons letters to Sandy Berger - 1996
Reasons for US support of Pakistan
New Bureau of South Asian Affairs
Indian-American community
The Brown amendment
US sanctions on Pakistan – F-16 aircraft
Drugs
Taliban victory in Afghanistan
Deobandi madrasas
Northern Alliance
Pakistan-Taliban relations
Pakistan Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI)
Pushtuns
Naseerullah Khan Babar
Jehangir Karamat
Sahabzada Yaqub Khan
Syed Refaqat Khan
Political and commercial corruption
Benazir Bhutto removed - 1996

Nawaz Sharif
Intra-government fighting
Turkmenistan to Pakistan pipeline
UNOCAL
Benazir/Simons relations
Attack on US Embassy (1979)
Anti-US "Whispering Campaign"
China-Pakistan relations
Pakistan Economy
Pakistan nuclear program
Berger visit 1996, A. Q. Khan
Iftikhar Murshed
Taliban in Kabul - 1996
Osama bin Laden/Taliban connection
Tracking bin Laden
US policy re assassination
East Africa Embassy bombings – August 1998
India, Pakistan nuclear explosion, May 1998, US Reaction
Comments on Foreign Service and academic careers

INTERVIEW

FAMILY, CHILDHOOD, SCHOOL: THE MIDWEST, THE SUBCONTINENT, DC, NEW ENGLAND, LIBERIA, FRANCE, AUSTRIA (1938-1963)

Q: What does the W stand for?

SIMONS: Winston.

Q: Winston. You go by Tom?

SIMONS: I go by Tom.

Q: Tom let's start, tell me about the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and then we will talk about your parents?

SIMONS: I was born in Crosby, Minnesota, a small town in central Minnesota, on September 4, 1938.

Q: First on the father's side. Where did the Simons and company come from?

SIMONS: The Simons' were an English family, but we don't know a whole lot about their background. We do know that the grandfather came from Elmira, New York, to St. Paul, Minnesota, while Minnesota was still a territory, the late 1840s, and he lived into the 1890s. The son who was my grandfather went to University of Minnesota Law School. Evidently not too bright, but he married a woman who was extremely bright, my grandmother whose name was Gotwald, in other words a German family. They had come west from Ohio. The family story is that she was the first woman to graduate from the University of Minnesota in the 1890s. She took this budding lawyer under her wing and supported him. My father was born in St. Paul, but they then moved to Bemidji, the coldest town in America, way up in the north, which is where he was raised. They were white-collar poor because there was no thought of contraception, so there were eight or nine extremely poor white-collar people. There was never ever money in the house, but they all somehow went to college. A lot of them took sports. My dad, born in 1903, stayed home with his mother while the older boys went to college. He went late to the University of Minnesota in the late '20s. He used to ghost papers for Bronco Nagurski, a fullback for Minnesota and then for the Chicago Bears. But he didn't have the money I think to stay in Minneapolis, and he graduated finally from St. Cloud State in 1932. I asked him why he went on to graduate school, and he said, "Because there were no jobs." He went to the University of Colorado and got his Ph.D. there in history in 1936. It was the year he married my mother, so I'm kind of a product of the University of Colorado.

Q: Now on your mother's side, what was her name and what kind of family?

SIMONS: Her name was Mary Jo Enochs. She was born on a farm in southwestern Indiana over near the Illinois border, south of Terre Haute. The family had come there in 1809 on a grant as Revolutionary War veterans; they'd come through the Cumberland Gap from the Carolinas, Scotch-Irish farmers, sort of the Lincoln trajectory. Lincoln and family ended up in Illinois about the same time, the early 19th century. And they had been there farming and mining; my grandfather not only had farms but was a deep-pit soft coal miner. So she was born there in 1911; it was a family of four girls and finally a boy in 1918 or 1919, and they moved to town, because neither parent had more than 4 years of school, they moved to town, when she was thirteen in 1924, into Sullivan, the county seat, so they could all go to high school. She and all her siblings went to college. The first of that family to go above grade school.

Q: Where was the push to get them into college?

SIMONS: I think it was just belief in education and betterment. You know, a very American story. We associate it now with minorities but I think in those days it was everybody. You just wanted to get ahead and wanted to do better. So she went to DePauw University in the depression in 1929 and she graduated in 1933. She went last year to her 70th anniversary, her 70th reunion at DePauw. Then she went on to graduate school. She actually went around reforming AOPi houses, Alpha Omicron Pi, it was a sorority, and that is how she ended up in Colorado, to reform the house there, but via an MA (Master of Arts) at the University of Iowa in Latin. She got an MA in Latin and was preparing to be a Latin teacher, and I think my dad was stoking the furnace in her sorority house, to

get through school, when they met. They eloped, married in 1936, and then she went off to do a teaching job in one town and he went off to teach in another town, but he became the dean of the junior college in this town of Crosby, Minnesota, where I was born. They moved up there together and had me in 1938.

Q: Now, did you kind of grow up in Crosby or what happened?

SIMONS: We stayed there for four years, then the war came, and all the men at the junior college went away to war and the college closed down. My dad went to Minneapolis/St. Paul with the NYA, the National Youth Administration, the local branch of a New Deal agency. He told me their job was to turn farm boys into lathe operators. So we lived there during the war, and then that was shutting down because we were winning the war. In another very New Deal move, he sort of trickled over to Washington.

Q: Did you get any feedback-- it was early days for you -- but about the NYA, because Mrs. Roosevelt was a big supporter, but it was considered by some to have Communist interests and all that.

SIMONS: I never got any of that. Both of them, by the time I was coming along, were kind of seared by the anti-Communism of the late '40s. I mean they went into the State Department in '45 and loved it. My mother is a firm New Dealer. My
Dad was less overt, but his favorite brother was a poet and the amanuensis of Wallace Stevens the poet. His name was Hi Simons, and a lot of Wallace Stevens' biography is based on his correspondence with my uncle Hi Simons. He was in Chicago and he was a left-winger of some kind. I don't know whether he was a party member or not, but he was left. My parents, though, gave me no recollections of the NYA as such. I will say, though, because I spent most of my career doing East-West, that when I was learning Russian at FSI (the Foreign Service Institute) in 1975, my mother came to me with a book of beginning Russian for English speakers. I looked at it, I opened it, and it was published in Moscow in 1937 by Progress Publishers, which was the Soviet foreign-language publishing house. I said, "Mom, where did you get this?" She said, "Oh, your Daddy and I were going to Russia to teach English." I said, "Oh, did you have any idea of what was happening in Russia in 1937 when this was published? A time when a third or a quarter of the population of Leningrad kind of disappeared." She said, "No, we had no idea. We were just going to make the world a better place."

Q: Well, there was this great movement of people. In another area you could have been a red diaper baby, you know.

SIMONS: But I wasn't, and in answer to your specific question even though I never got anything about the NYA. How they got into the Foreign Service was he was kicking around jobs in Washington, I don't know, and he was bored. So he was taking a course in constitutional law at George Washington University. This was in 1945, and at one point he looked up at a bulletin board, and there was a 3x5 card saying the State Department was recruiting people to go to India. He'd taken a course somewhere on British Imperialism, and he went home and you know, my mother was eight years younger, but

he went to her and he said, "Do you want to go to India?" And she said, "Sure." So they joined the State Department. He wasn't Foreign Service until the '50s, when he integrated under Wristonization, but it was a State Department job because it was that great Manpower recruiting surge, the expansion of the postwar years, America entering the world. He was sent to Calcutta as an economic analyst, and I don't think he had any special training for that. But we got on a boat, the DePauw Victory, I remember this because it was my mother's college, on the 28th of October 1945, and we arrived in Calcutta on the 6th of December. We went through the Suez Canal and we saw the statue of De Lesseps at Port Said. It was before it was blown up. The first foreign soil I set foot on therefore was British India.

Q: How far had you gotten in school by the time you left?

SIMONS: I had finished second grade but because of moving around from St. Paul to Fairfax, we lived in Fairlington and I went to Bailey's Crossroads School and finished second grade there. But it was early, in other words I then picked up a school year, so by the time we got to Calcutta I was seven, and they sent me away to boarding school in the Himalayan foothills, to Woodstock School in Mussoorie. My mother was trying to have another baby, the summer heat in Bengal is intense, and communal tensions – Hindu/Muslim – were rising; so they sent me up to Woodstock, and there I was in third grade, so I was already a little ahead.

Q: What was your impression of Calcutta when you arrived there?

SIMONS: Oh you know, just a big place. We lived in a lovely little villa with a garden, which we never had before. It was that kind of thing that happens in the Foreign Service that sort of moves you up a step on the social ladder a little bit. Garden, servants, never had that before. I liked it, loved it really. I can say that my continuous memory began with the trip out; in other words before then you have patchy childhood memories of wetting your pants when Santa Claus comes and stuff like that, but my continuous memories started when we got on that boat. So I basically loved everything about it. I didn't like being sent away to boarding school. They put me on a train in Howrah Station and I went for three days on that train, weeping all the way up to Dehradun. I lost the key to my trunk out of the train along the way. In those days they wouldn't pry open a trunk for you, so they had to send back to Calcutta to get the damned key, and so I was there with the clothes I had come on for the two weeks that took. I was ill all the time and lonely, but I didn't feel unhappy. I shot marbles by an open fountain they called the "donkey drink" while I waited. Children are very accepting, and actually there were a lot of exciting, wonderful things going on.

Q: What was the school like?

SIMONS: It was a missionary school. It was one of the better schools, Woodstock School in Mussoorie. It's still there, still going strong with a very strong alumni association here in the United States, because lots of people have been there and are very loyal to it: missionaries, business people, children of officials like myself. There were Indians. My

roommate who had a bed-wetting problem was Ranjit Singh, a little Sikh boy. In this dorm we slept on charpois, wood frames with fiber webbing. We were strapped by Miss Rickert, our Swedish housemistress, for things that we didn't feel we were morally responsible for; she strapped me for being out of bed – I was on the pot with diarrhea -- before 6:00 a.m., which was forbidden. So I learned about injustice in that school. But basically I remember it as exciting. I remember taking off into the countryside by myself all day and just exploring, being bitten by leeches as you waded through these streams. Jackals circled our dorm in the night. I mean it was exotic. With the loneliness and the shock of separation from your parents came also this feeling of liberation and adventure.

Q: How old were you then?

SIMONS: Seven, so it was like a birth. One of my favorite stories is still Kipling's "The Light That Failed," about being sent back to England at that age to horrible loneliness; but it was better than that; Kim is another favorite.

Q: With Kim and?

SIMONS: Kim is still the greatest novel about India, as Nirad Chaudhuri once admitted with regret. Then we left India. We went back to Washington, and we lived in Arlington at that point, not far from here, Buchanan Street. Then my Dad went out again in November of 1947 to newly independent Pakistan, to our Embassy in Karachi. I think a lot of his job was collecting books and materials for the State Department, which didn't have materials on India and Pakistan or those parts. But he was also a political reporting officer. My mother stayed to teach Latin in Washington-Lee High School, and I stayed with her, lonely and unhappy, in Fifth Grade at Stonewall Jackson School, alone because she had not succeeded at having a sibling for me (yet). We went out, again by boat, a long boat trip in June of 1948 to Karachi. I loved it.

Q: When had the partition taken place?

SIMONS: In August, mid-August of 1947. So my Dad went in November and we went a year later. I went to Karachi Grammar School, which is one of the elite schools, a day school, there in Karachi. It was a wonderful educational experience. Actually Woodstock was too. The education I got at those schools was excellent for me. In Karachi I had the run of the city. I was nine years old. I had a best friend, the son of a BOAC official, what is now British Airways, Derek Dodd. "Bloody old artful codgers," he called it: B-O-A-C. We had the run of the city on our bicycles, the city of Karachi which is now 12 or 14 million and dangerous. In those days it was 400,000 surrounded by refugee camps that had another 4 or 500,000 refugees from India around it in tents, but it was perfectly safe for a nine- and ten-year old little European boys. We had the run of the bazaar. I collected coins. I used to shoot crows from our roof with a slingshot and loved it.

Q: Were you speaking the language or not?

SIMONS: I took Urdu from a teacher and managed to learn the writing and the pronunciation before we left the next summer, but nothing in terms of grammar or communication.

Q: I was wondering, speaking of Kim and Kipling and all that, were you of an age where you were sort of absorbing sort of the Raj and seeing the movies, Lives of a Bengal Lancer, the Charge of the Light Brigade and all that sort of stuff?

SIMONS: No, I don't think it was so much that. I don't think it was that kind of romanticism, although I did fall in love with Kipling and obviously you absorb some of the Raj, but you were at the end of the Raj. You had the feeling of over. You had the horrible communal tensions rising. My first experience with Islam as a real problem came then. I was in boarding school when Mr. Jinnah proclaimed Direct Action Day in Calcutta, in August 1946. In other words, he said, we had come to the end of the constitutional path, and that unleashed the Muslim slums across the river into Calcutta. The butchered dead were piled up in the streets so high that they couldn't get them off, and the birds were eating them. My parents lived through that. The romance of the Raj was kind of tempered by what was actually happening. We were sort of protected. We were Europeans, sort of post-British. They liked us better than the British because they saw us a new fresh force in world affairs. Also they had good experience with the Americans during the war because CBI – the China-Burma-India Theater - was out there flying over the hump, General Wingate and that sort, fighting the Burma campaign.

Q: Wingate's Marauders.

SIMONS: Yeah, so there is a positive feeling for Americans. We were profiteers in the Raj without sharing the downside. But the downside was all around us.

Q: By the time you got to Pakistan, were you getting from the other kids at all about the experiences and the horror of this partition or not?

SIMONS: Not so much. First of all it's a problem to this day that the cultures out there, whether Muslim or Hindu, place a very high premium on modesty, so people don't talk about horrors. They preserve them in the sanctity of their families. I used to ask people when I was Ambassador to Pakistan in the late '90s, what was their family experience in the partition and then you would get the horror stories. You would ask them, have you told your children about this and they'd say no. So it's a repressed kind of thing, and you did not get the horrors of partition except by indirection, I mean "Why were all those refugees there?" I can remember for instance in Karachi in 1948 and 1949 we had a driver, kind of a Raj story. My parents had a car and they hired a driver. The man had bug eyes; he wore a suit, but he was very thin, and his eyes bugged out. I said to my Dad, "Why do his eyes bug out?" He said, "Because he is starving." So it was, you know, a time of sort of pondering, along with the excitement. I have to say what I gathered was the excitement. I picked up a kind of enthusiasm for Pakistan as an adventure, and so in a strange way Pakistan's liberation coincided with my own as a ten-year old. I never lost the kind of connection.

Q: In travelling around on your bike and all that, were you going around, I mean did you have Pakistani friends or were they?

SIMONS: I had some Pakistani friends and visited them in their homes, and they would come to our little house. But I think they were mainly of a wealthier and sort of aristocratic social class than we were. My best friend was this Derek Dodd who was I now think looking back lower middle class, I think you could say like us, which was more congenial. But then we were sort of on the diplomatic side too, but the diplomatic corps was fairly small in those days. My awareness of Pakistani society was pretty superficial. The school, I mean the standards of teaching in the school, the respect for academic excellence, were striking compared to American schools. They used to give a card out every week in general assembly to the best student of the week before, and I really competed for this card, and I got them a lot. But I also learned sports. I learned field hockey, I learned soccer and I learned to fight, because you carry the American flag on your back, so there is a lot of "Yank this, Yank that," and you have to learn to fight – you weigh yourselves in stone - so there was that element of the British system.

Q: Was it sort of based on the public school system, complete with flags and all that sort of stuff?

SIMONS: It was modified because it was a day school, but you had proctors and you had monitors and things. Older students were responsible, but not in any really sort of burdensome way.

Q: Were they getting you ready for the O levels or?

SIMONS: That was the purpose of the school. But I don't even remember what form I was in. It was in the equivalent of sixth grade, but the O levels were a ways to go.

Q: Quite a ways to go, yeah. Did you get any feel from the Embassy, what the Embassy was doing? Did your father bring work home to the dinner table or not?

SIMONS: We talked about it. People were excited to be there. I mean I knew all of the Embassy officers. In our little house he had batched with two others while my Mom and I were still in northern Virginia, so we knew them as friends. We visited. In those days I collected Time magazine. So I have every issue of Time magazine from 1948 and I think from 1949 until we left. I got those by going to peoples' houses and cadging them. So I used to go to the Chargé d'affaire's house, - we were between ambassadors – to the house of Charles Lewis, who was a Virginia gentleman. On the other side of us was the Economic Counselor, Franklin Wolf, the larger house. I was sort of the oldest child. In other words the younger officers, Dave Newsom, Harold Josif, Nick Thacher, were having their children, but I was nine, so I was in-between. I was sort of the mascot of this little community. They remain family friends to this day. There was a feeling of collective adventure. I mean a lot of them were like my parents, the first generation of their families to go to university, the first to be abroad. So America's entry to the world

sort of coincided with their personal growth and their social advancement. So there was sort of an excitement and a positive feeling about that. Yeah, we loved it.

Q: Did you get a feel about India there?

SIMONS: Well, what you got was an anti-Indian feeling. I mean Pakistan was terribly anti-Indian at that time, the official ideology and the experience of people. But we had been to India, so actually they couldn't give us lectures about India and Indians in the way that you can to real greenhorns because we'd already been there. India was just India; I never had any animus against India. I mean you have political things that you like or don't like, but that's the way it is with Pakistan as well.

Q: Well then, you were there for how long? From '48 to…?

SIMONS: '48 to '49.

Q: '48, '49.

SIMONS: '48 to '49, so a year.

Q: And then what?

SIMONS: We came back to Washington. My Dad, I don't know if he did it right away, but he very rapidly became Pakistan Desk Officer (in the Department). I went to Sidwell Friends School, entered the Seventh Grade at the age of 11, just 11, so I had that one year ahead I was still preserving, so I was young for my class but went to Sidwell. We lived in Virginia, still in our little house on North Buchanan Street for that fall and winter, and then my parents bought a house in northwest Washington, Chevy Chase, DC, near Chevy Chase Circle on Broad Branch Road. We moved there in March of 1950. We continued to be very involved with Pakistan and Pakistanis and with the South Asia Division, the old SOA, which was India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Ceylon, as it then was, and Burma. SOA people had a strong sense of identity. We saw each other, they knew each others' kids, they partied together. There was a real esprit de corps and a morale in the old South Asia Division.

But, Stu, you also have to remember that there was an ideology connected with this. If you were on the Pakistan side there was the problem of India: India's overweening power and did they accept Pakistan and all of that. But I think in the main it was anti-Communism. They were starting to roll with the idea of the Soviet threat. The Cold War was on its way.

Q: Well, McCarthy was really beginning to get rolling.

SIMONS: McCarthy was. My mother took me down to the Senate, and I saw elderly Senator Lehman from New York cross the floor of the Senate where McCarthy was doing one of his rants about Communists in the State Department and the lists he claimed to

have, and ask McCarthy for his lists in front of his desk. McCarthy refused to give it to him, and I watched Lehman turning on his heel and walking back to his desk. I mean it was really sort of a high moment. You were getting the loyalty pressure within the Department even under Truman; remember this is late Truman, this is '49 and '50.

Q: They had loyalty boards.

SIMONS: You had loyalty boards, so that was out there. So the Cold War was underway. You did not yet look at Pakistan as an ally, but you did look at South Asia, including India, as a place that was vulnerable to the Communists.

Q: Well, Nehru of course was running high at that point.

SIMONS: That's right, and he was a socialist.

Q: And was almost viscerally anti-American.

SIMONS: That's right, but with the more specific objection -- as I later learned, I didn't know this at the time -- to the U.S. entry into the Korean War. The hot war broke out in June of 1950. I learned about it delivering the Times Herald around Chevy Chase, DC, and I had a map watching the advance of the North Korean troops down to the Pusan Perimeter. So it was a tense and sort of frightening time, and the people dealing with South Asia believed they had a mission to help save it from Communism, and partly through development. Remember the Korean War really put a boost into the economy out there, because they started producing for the American war effort.

Q: And Japan was a great beneficiary. India of course, all of a sudden I can't remember his name but…

SIMONS: It was Krishna Menon.

Q: Yeah, the man we loved to hate. He loomed very large as India's Ambassador at the UN (United Nations) for sometime.

SIMONS: I think that's right, but it was seen as a danger, a kind of subversion or fecklessness that gave us a mission. Then in the '50s as you got into the development decade, the decade later associated with Walt Whitman Rostow, you got the idea of bringing countries like this to the take-off stage.

Q: To the take-off stage, yes.

SIMONS: By the development of modern systems. So you had a two-pronged ideology, which was that you were saving them from Communism by bringing them to the take-off stage of self-sustaining development. That was pretty powerful for people working it, and it disappeared later. Beginning of the '60s that sort of disappeared, partly because they were developing to the point where it didn't look as if they were going to be subverted,

and second because the Cold War quieted down or became manageable, or seemed to have become manageable.

Q: This was the Eisenhower period?

SIMONS: Well, it was really Johnson. I mean it was the '60s after the Cuban Missile crisis. But I was in college then.

Q: Okay, let's go back to Sidwell Friends and all this. Your father stayed…for sometime he was a civil servant at that point.

SIMONS: He was a civil servant, but during those years the jobs that he had were first, the Pakistan desk. I don't think it was OIR; I think OIR was earlier working on South Asia. I think he was in OIR, what became INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) during that period between November of '46 and November of '47 when he went out to Pakistan. When he came back to the Department in the summer of 1949 it was the Pakistan desk and SOA. That lasted until '53, until the Eisenhower Administration. At that point I can remember my mother drawing me into our little kitchen up on Broad Branch Road and sitting me on a high stool and taking my hands in both of hers and saying, "Tommy, something terrible has happened." And I said, "Mom, what it is?" She said, "Your Daddy's been transferred to the Morocco Desk." Because for her a kind of transfer like that, coming from humble circumstances and living through the Depression, it meant he might lose his job and he'd never get another job.

Q: This is a period where once you got a job, boy you stuck to it. The Depression generation.

SIMONS: It was that kind of fear, and I didn't understand it. Morocco sounded good to me, you know, I was in high school. But anyway it was during that period that he risked, he tried out for the Foreign Service.

Q: 1954, I think it was.

SIMONS: He took the Foreign Service exam, studied for it, took and passed it, and became a Foreign Service Officer.

Q: Did your father or your family, your mother being an ardent New Dealer, did the McCarthy period, was it a subject of conversation or influence at all on you?

SIMONS: Yeah, it was frightening. And I have to say that at Sidwell Friends School, I remember as an anecdote -- because I don't remember intentionally these kinds of things, having political opinions at Sidwell Friends School never became really a personal issue among us kids – but I can remember we had a straw poll for the 1951 British elections -- remember Churchill had come back in 1950 and then they had another election in '51 – and I think I was the only kid in class who voted Labour.

Q: Did Alger Hiss come up, being a Quaker? I don't know...

SIMONS: Yeah, well, Alger Hiss of course came up, but not for that reason. Certainly we followed the Army-McCarthy hearings religiously. I was actually home sick. I was there, not at school, I was in a bathrobe watching that day when Joe Welch said, "Have you no shame?" So we were very much on the -- how would I put it -- the anti-anti-Communist side. We tended to feel, I mean there was Alger Hiss, but you had the gut feeling without understanding very much that he was being persecuted. And the Rosenbergs, you felt sort of queasy about that. It didn't seem sort of right. So we were on that side of the political spectrum. But it was not something you talked a lot about. I went to school with Eleanor Judd, Walter Judd's daughter, Mr. China Lobby.

Q: Mr. China Lobby absolutely. Was he from Minnesota or?

SIMONS: He was; and I had a crush on my classmate Estelle Knowland who was the daughter of Senator William Knowland, also of the China Lobby and the owner of the Oakland Tribune. When I was out in California after retirement I gave her a call and she's also going strong, after a rocky life.

Q: Oh yeah, he was a very powerful right-winger.

SIMONS: Yeah, but there were also Democrats. I mean, Bill Kerr, the son of Bob Kerr from Oklahoma, was also in our class. So it was the sort of thing that was just part of the background in school; but it was very important in our family. It seemed like a dangerous and sort of worrisome, ominous time.

Q: By the way, when you were going to school what were your favorite subjects and were you reading any books, fiction or non-fiction, that sort of influenced you?

SIMONS: I loved history. I liked languages. I started French there in the Ninth Grade and it's still my best foreign language. I had a wonderful poetry course in the 11th Grade just before I left but I loved poetry before then. I can remember memorizing poems. I have a good memory, and I remember memorizing poems in Karachi. I can remember memorizing Alfred Noyes' The Highwayman in our little living room there.

Q: Oh yes, The Highwayman came riding, riding. Was it Bess, the brown-eyed innkeeper's daughter, something like that?

SIMONS: In Karachi, in that little house there in Karachi. So I loved poetry already. So languages and history were what I like best. I had English. I liked grammar and I got good grades. Sciences were harder, I worked harder at them, I did okay. I didn't do well, never did well, so science and math were on one side and history and languages and English on the other. John Brown's Body was a favorite and still is. Stephen Vincent Benét.

Q: Oh yeah, that description of the Battle of Gettysburg and all.

SIMONS: Curly with the butterball legs. I can still quote whole passages of John Brown's Body.

Q: I remember the recording with Tyrone Power and Raymond Massey and Judith Anderson.

SIMONS: We didn't have that, but I do remember listening to Edward R. Murrow's I Can Hear It Now record to the point where I still remember it today.

Q: One of the early long-playing records. Well now, were you pointed towards anything after Sidwell Friends? I'm sure college was in the offing. I mean your family.

SIMONS: College was in the offing. I was a studious kid. It was what I did well, it pleased my parents and I was young for athletics. I was not a bad athlete, but I was small for football, for instance. I was the perennial scrub; I always played but never did well. Studies was what I was good at and proud of. I had friends so it was okay, but college was there. Pointed in terms of career not so much. I never as long as I can remember thought about careers, I never wanted to do anything but the Foreign Service. But my Dad was very anxious to keep options open in my mind. A couple of his brothers had been doctors. He admired lawyers, so he kept encouraging me to keep an open mind and not pass on anything. I was so young. I went to college in the summer of 1954, and I'd just turned 16, because in those days the Ford Foundation had an early admissions program that took kids out of junior year and put them into college. There had been a kid at Sidwell the year before, '53, who had done that and gone to Yale. So they signed me up for that and I got it. I went to Yale, but it meant that since I was already a year ahead, now I was two years ahead and went at barely 16 into an all boys' school. I was very uncertain on how to relate to girls, so there was not much to do but study. I studied; that first year I was in the 98th percentile.

Q: This is '54 to?

SIMONS: '54 to '58.

Q: Before we get to that, did your father, in Morocco, how long was he on the Moroccan Desk?

SIMONS: I think for two years. So he was there during the exile of the King, during the decolonization.

Q: Did he bring home anything from what I like to call the Battle of North Africa between the European Bureau and the African Bureau?

SIMONS: Yeah, I think he was on the other side. In other words I don't think he was pro-European. I think he was pro-liberation.

Q: I mean the whole apparatus, the people were present at the creation under Truman.

SIMONS: Yeah, but he didn't bring much of it home, except I remember the feeling that the French were screwing it up. They were probably on the side of the liberation.

Q: Did he go overseas?

SIMONS: Well, I went to Yale in '54, and in '55 he went back overseas. The way it happened was that he was looking for a patron who would take care of him, and another veteran of the old South Asia Division was Elbert Matthews, Bert Matthews. Naomi Matthews was a close friend until she died recently with horrible rheumatic arthritis, but anyway, family friends. Bert Matthews was going to Liberia, had been assigned to Liberia as Ambassador, and my Dad signed on as DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission). Then Bert didn't go, and so my Dad was assigned there as DCM to Monrovia anyway, and went in the summer of 1955 with a Republican political appointee named Richard Jones, who had been an early African-American general in the U.S. Army. Dick Jones. He had wonderful stories to tell about clearing out the whorehouses in Louisville after World War I. But he was there because he ran a black Republican paper in Chicago; I think it was The Defender or something. So that was the ambassador with his handsome wife Laretha and his son. My Dad was DCM to him for two years. I spent two summers out there working for a Firestone subsidiary, the U.S. Trading Company. Firestone had a big rubber plantation and USTC was their trading subsidiary. So I spent one summer working in their warehouse down at the Freeport of Monrovia, then the next summer up at the plantation at Harbel working behind the counter in their store.

Q: Well let's talk about that and then we will come back to Yale. How did you find Liberia?

SIMONS: I found it wonderful fun for me. I mean going out with girls and summer romances, and when I was at Harbel I had a pick-up truck of my own, so I was kind of liberated. I lived in a big house with a Dutchman. I learned to read Dutch comic books with this guy. So that part was all fun. Our next-door neighbor is a woman who had sung for Benny Goodman and had a beautiful daughter. Anyway, all of that was fun.

Liberia itself made me queasy because it was an American colony and Americans acted like colonists. The legal tender was the dollar. They'd had stories about the riots in 1943 when there had been some serious whupping going on. You would have a situation where they would discover gold in Sierra Leone, or diamonds next door, and the plantation would lose half its work force overnight. They would just sort of take off. It was just an unpleasant, uneasy colonial situation. I would frequent the bars in Monrovia at that point and with sort of low life and roughness. It was sort of dingy and exploited, and I didn't like it. I can remember I took a boat out there the first time in the summer of '55. I took a train all the way across what was still the Old South to New Orleans and got a boat, a freighter that took us to Dakar, where I spoke my first continuous French in a bar; then to Abidjan -- it was the French Ivory Coast -- and there I was taken in charge by a Frenchman because my parents had cabled ahead and they knew I had a day. He took me

up in a car to a great bauxite mine and I used my French. He was a total colonial, oblivious to the fact that (in retrospect) colonial rule was crumbling. It became independent three years later. But the way he talked about Africans: I grew up in segregated Washington so I had no special liberal bleeding heart, but the way he talked about Africans I thought was disgusting.

Q: I can remember talking to a British Foreign Service officer who had been in the colonial circuits and asked him what he did right after the war. He said, "Well we were demobilizing African troops. We were putting them back in the trees."

SIMONS: It was that kind of talk. In segregated Washington I grew up on racist jokes, and there was one person of color at Sidwell Friends School, and he was the son of a Ceylonese diplomat. You knew blacks only as servants. But man, you didn't talk about them like that Frenchman, you didn't even think about them that way. So anyway that was the Ivory Coast.

Q: How did you find Yale when you got there? You say you were young to begin with. This kind of put you off to one side.

SIMONS: Yeah, I was young to begin with but I loved the courses because I love to study and I love to learn, and that's what I did the first year. Then in the course of that first year in freshman dorms I was taken in hand by a bunch of guys in the room next to me, and they were all from Haverford School on the Philadelphia Main Line. They had another bunch of friends from Haverford at Princeton, and there were others around the Yale campus. They kind of took me on board and invited me to room with them sophomore year. They admired me and recognized me I think as a little special, but basically treated me as a good guy and since my parents beginning that year were in West Africa, they were the people I also went to for vacations. I mean I went to relatives to the extent I had some, but we sort of did our helling -- such as it was -- down on the Main Line. So that sort of saved me from becoming a geek. The Ford Foundation shut down this program fairly quickly because it was turning out nerds, studious people isolated over their little briefcases. These guys -- and I remain friends with many of them to this day -- they saved me from that, and then junior year I went to France. I took my junior year in France on a Sweet Briar Junior Year in France program, which is the oldest and still goes on. There weren't many of them in those days. '56 and '57 I spent in France.

Yeah, there was a spirit of public service spirit at Yale, but I was already pointed to public service. The people I was closest to at Yale became engineers, brain surgeons, a little bit of everything, rather than public service per say. So I can't say that there wasn't a public service ethic, but I wasn't part of that. Then I went to Harvard as a graduate student in 1958, and that was kind of a full coming of age because it was co-educational and I took just history. In other words I didn't have to take a range of courses that distracted me. I remember I got all A's my first year, eight straight A's. I don't think it had been done for years and I'm not sure it's been done since then. I had professors like Crane Brinton and William L. Langer, just great professors. Franklin Ford, just a galaxy of people, Stuart Hughes and then Sir Hamilton Gibb. I read Islamic history under Sir

Hamilton Gibb as I prepared for my orals. So Harvard was a great experience but not particularly public-service oriented. In other words it was I who was public-service oriented.

Q: If I had to, I'd say Harvard was much more academically oriented. What about, just quickly going back to the time in France, what were you picking up there?

SIMONS: Everything. I mean I was in a great city. I had the run of a great city. I was staying with another Junior-Year-in-France boy with a widow and her son. She was from the old Moroccan colonial service and very distinguished but poor, down on her heels sort of, but a bourgeoise. A fine bourgeois apartment right in the heart of the city, and with the run of the town. I was walking distance to my school; dating girls, loving it. The school was just out of this world. Sciences Po, with the kind of academic discipline that just lifted me to a different place. I also had great professors there. I was in a seminar "of method," it's called, for foreigners, just foreigners with a senior lawyer at the Conseil d'Etat, an old Radical Socialist who taught us foreigners, Jacques Solal-Celigny. We had one seminar a week and for that seminar you had to prepare a one-page, or a one-and-a-half page outline of a presentation you would give on a given topic. I was used to excelling in American education just by learning everything and giving it all back, and I tried that with this guy. I would come in, we would have "Free France" and I would read 2,000 pages, read all of De Gaulle, and I'd come in with a six-page outline, and I kept getting six out of ten. It was graded on ten and I kept getting sixes week after week. Finally I went to him and I said, "What am I doing wrong, because I know everything?" He said, "I can tell that, but what we want in France is a little more discipline, so what I want from you on any topic, I want an introduction, three parts and a conclusion and maximum of a page." By the time I left that school I automatically broke down any topic given to me without thinking into an introduction, three parts and a conclusion. To the end of my Foreign Service career that's also the way I wrote analyses and cables on anything given to me. That was a trigger for an enormous intellectual liberation as well, because I had sort of the best of the American intellectual background and with this additional French conciseness. The other thing I learned in France was how to disagree about religion and politics with someone and remain friends, because those days in America you really couldn't talk about religion.

Q: You weren't supposed to talk about them.

SIMONS: You weren't supposed to talk about them at all. So I got into intensive discussions with people that I disagreed with, and it was okay. That lesson in intellectual toleration was also a permanent lesson that you could like someone and not agree at all.

Q: You get any feel for the politics of France?

SIMONS: Oh yeah. No, I was enthralled with the politics because that was part of what we were learning, and they were very complicated politics. I just loved the complexity of it and sort of the drama of it, and I used to spend a lot of time in the National Assembly. I'd go down and get a ticket. I was in the National Assembly the day that they passed the

Treaty of Rome that established a Common Market. I was outside the National Assembly the night that the Guy Mollet Government fell, which was the Socialist government that had come in in '54 and ran into the Algerian War and finally fell in the spring of 1957; so I was there. Yeah, I was very engaged in French politics, to the point that when I got back to Yale -- I can't say I learned very much because you know you're a young person -- I'll never forget -- my professor of European history at Yale was an astounding, great German scholar named Hajo Holborn. He was a German refugee who'd written our course textbook on Europe from 1815 to the present. He gave a lecture course, and I was in it and doing well. He came up to me at a certain point in the spring of 1958 when France was falling apart. There had been the revolt in Algiers in May of '58, and you'd gotten a deterioration with continually younger prime ministers, a whole series. They were obviously sacrificial lambs in the system; they were being put in place now because they weren't expected to do anything. Holborn was a dignified man. If you had a toga, I thought of him in a toga. He said, "Mr. Simons, you know a lot about French politics, what is happening, what's going on?" I almost swelled up and burst, but I said, "Well, I think what is happening is that the traditional French respect for age, this gerontocracy, is finally breaking up, and there's finally new room in the system for young men." Of course, De Gaulle at 69 or whatever he was was a month from coming back to power in a revolution, so I couldn't have been further off base. Anyway, that was sort of my introduction to politics in France too. It was sort of an all-purpose year. The lesson in modesty helped in the Foreign Service too.

Q: At Harvard you were taking what? I mean what were you pointed towards?

SIMONS: I started off in French history because that's what I liked. I took three courses in French history actually that first year, early modern and modern, plus modern diplomatic because I was still thinking of the Foreign Service. When it came time, those were the courses. But I also had an elective, in other words not what I had been doing, and it was a course in Habsburg history, and I fell in love with the teacher, William Slottman. By the time it came to prepare for my orals, Harvard in those days required four fields: you had to pick four fields for your orals, and only two of them could be in the same time period. So I took Early Modern and Modern French, and Modern Diplomatic, with Arno Mayer who was a great scholar also, a young scholar at that time, and controversial. Then I was casting about for an ancient or medieval field. I didn't want to take Greeks and Romans again; I had had it at Yale. So I took Medieval Islamic with this great scholar Sir Hamilton Gibb, who was a University Professor -- there were only five, they got $25,000 a year, which seemed like a fortune in those days -- so I did that. Meanwhile when I got to the point of thinking where do I want to go for my thesis, I decided I didn't want to go back to France. Been there, done that kind of. So I decided to go to Vienna and have this man Bill Slottman as my thesis director, and that's what I did.

So after I passed my orals in the spring of 1960 I went. Actually I had a topic that was tri-lateral. I picked the early Catholic press in Europe, and my original plan was to go and spend some months in Vienna, some months in Cologne and some months in Paris, because they all three had early major Catholic journalists. What I ended up doing was spending till May in Vienna, then going to Paris and doing research there. I lost 15

pounds. I had a Sheldon Fellowship, which was a very good fellowship, and I didn't have any of it left, and I had no money and I was losing weight. I hooked up with a friend and we roomed together in Paris but he had to lend me money: Robert Paxton, he's a great historian of the French Right, now retired from Columbia. I ended up doing an all-Vienna thesis when I got back to Harvard.

Q: So you got your PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) in…?

SIMONS: Well, there's four fields for the orals, but the thesis was on mid-nineteenth century Viennese history.

Q: Wow.

SIMONS: It was an intellectual life and times of a man who started off in this new Viennese bourgeoisie and ended up being part of Austria's first Catholic reform group, which was then repressed and put on the Index by the Church after the collapse of the Revolution of 1848, and who then became first a historian and then an anti-Semite. So he was a second-rate guy, but almost everything that happened in Vienna in the Nineteenth Century kind of passed through him. It was a great way to learn about Central Europe.

Q: Did you pick up why anti-Semitism seems to have flourished in Austria; it still seems to flourish in Austria.

SIMONS: It's sort of a frontier, a fragile and sort of febrile kind of culture, kind of an overheated culture. Jews coming out of Central Europe during the '30s can remember Vienna as the worst, even worse than Nazi Germany in overt anti-Semitism. It was Nazi Germany that was organizing the industrial destruction of Jewry, but it was in Vienna where they were spit on and beaten with umbrellas by ladies of high degree. I think it is mysterious. I think it is hard to explain except for the frontier and the fact that it was so multi-cultural. Then it had lost an empire, totally lost. It was sort of reduced to nothing. My man, in the mid-Nineteenth Century, it was also mysterious as to why he'd become anti-Semitic. He had not had much to do with Jews - Vienna was closed to Jews until 1848 - and then it opened up and the Jews came in from Galicia and Hungary in a very, very big way. They very rapidly became very strong in the liberal professions, in the press, and I think it was that transformation which was just a shattering of the more orderly small-scale, older bourgeois Biedermeier kind of ideal that he had, which would have sort of provoked it. I think it is also the fact that he was repressed by his own Church that made him seek enemies outside.

Q: You got your PhD and then what? What year was this?

SIMONS: I got my PhD in '63. I had meanwhile courted a girl so when I left Harvard in 1963 I left her. I took the Foreign Service exam in the fall of '62 in Boston. Passed but then was called up late for my class; in other words I missed the July class of A-100 class in 1963. A family friend, Harold Josif who has been interviewed by you, was the head of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Desk, and he took me on as a temp while I was waiting for the

September class. Then another friend of my father's who was in the Junior Officer training program, JOT, called me up at a certain point in August and said, "Would you like to escort the Duke Ellington Orchestra around the Near East and South Asia from September to November, because you speak French and we need an escort who can deal with Syria and like that?" I said, "Yeah, I would."

Once I got my PhD I was subject to the draft, so I had gone out to Bladensburg and joined a military intelligence unit there, but I hadn't signed yet. I called the girl I had been dating up in Cambridge and I said to her, "The most wonderful thing has happened." She was going to visit me for Labor Day down here. "The most wonderful thing has happened: I'm going to go around with Duke Ellington in 14 countries in the Near East and South Asia." You could just hear the voice on the other end of the phone freeze. She said, "How nice." I figured at that point, well the hell with it. So when she came down for Labor Day I was staying in a little apartment over by Dupont Circle, and we went to La Fonda Restaurant on 17th Street and I asked her to marry me. Then we went to the old Occidental down by the Willard the next night, and I always say that was when she asked me to marry her, but what she actually said was, "Don't you think we should call our parents?" So we did and we were engaged when I went with Ellington. Meanwhile I went out to the old non-com out at Bladensburg and said, "Look, I'm going to take off but I'll check back in when we return in December." But we were curtailed with Ellington because of Kennedy's assassination. We were in Ankara and came back. I came back and wrote my report and didn't go back to Bladensburg, and we got married on the 23rd of December in Chillicothe, Ohio. Showered with presents from the Duke Ellington people, the band people and Billy Strayhorn. I still have the book he sent. Then I called out to Bladensburg and said, "What can I tell you, I'm married." That old non-com said, "Boy, those officers are really going to be mad." So I never served as a result of that, because you had the Kennedy order in place that if you are over 26 and married you weren't called.

Q: What was the background of your wife?

SIMONS: My wife is the daughter of an ophthalmologist. She was born in 1938 when he was in residency in Rochester, New York, at the Strong Memorial Hospital, and she moved when she was tiny to Chillicothe, Ohio, because he bought a practice there. He was from a dirt-poor Irish farm family in south-central Wisconsin, very poor, a big family. He had walked into town to school, he had left the Church and gone to college, the first of that generation and the only one of that generation till the two youngest came along. So he had taken this practice in 1938 in southeastern Ohio because it had become available. Her mother was a Taft, one of the branches that went West, that had gone to Wisconsin. Her father had been a printer in Menominee, Wisconsin, which is really Minneapolis country, which is what southeastern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin are. Her mother had gone to the University of Minnesota, because the father moved from Menominee to become a founding member of the Deluxe Check Printing Company in St. Paul, which is still going strong. So they became wealthy 40 years later when Deluxe went on the market, because they had inherited stock. But they were dirt-poor then, and he had taken this practice in southeastern Ohio, to her mother's disappointment, because

she had literary and cultural aspirations. She was a great reader. She would have loved to be in a more cultivated atmosphere. But she spent the next forty years in this paper-mill town of 50,000, moving to Boston only in the 1980s when it was too late for her to enjoy it. But it was that kind of Willa Cather-type American story, Midwestern, striving, upwardly mobile, poor.

Q: Your wife, where did she go to college?

SIMONS: She went to Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin. She was two years behind me because I was two years early, but we are within a month of each other in age. She is August and I'm September of 1938. She went to Lawrence. She was a hellion, very undisciplined, and she then came East because she had an uncle in Concord, Massachusetts, and after graduation he got her a job in a computer lab. She had fallen in love with mathematics because she mistrusted language and mathematics seemed pure to her, so she went and got an MA (Master of Arts) in math at Boston College. She was doing that when I met her through a friend who had been on the boat when I was going to do my PhD research in Vienna, and had been to Lawrence with her. So that is how we met and then started to date in Cambridge. Then she went to work for a subsidiary of Bell Telephone Laboratories in North Andover. It was one of the first big computer operations, I mean it had a mainframe computer that filled a room. They had rooms full of people, young women punching cards. She was a computer programmer at that stage, in the early stage of computing. Then I told you how we ended up getting engaged.

EARLY FOREIGN SERVICE: WASHINGTON AND GENEVA (1963-1967)

Q: When did you come into the Foreign Service?

SIMONS: July 15, 1963. John Kennedy signed my first commission. And it was also interesting because there was a Catch 22 involved. In those days you could come in as a Class Seven if you had a PhD and were 25. I had a PhD but was not 25, so I came in as a Class Eight at $5,940, which is what it got you in those days. First as a Reserve Officer, and then I was converted to FSO (Foreign Service Officer) Eight in September, so in the end I worked my way every single step up to Career Minister, which is what I was when I retired.

Q: How did you find the A-100 course, the basic course?

SIMONS: I thought it was super. Yeah, I liked it a lot. They had very smart people. I had a very good class. I had a class of exciting people. I think it was Bob Barnett leading it at the time, sort of a reforming alcoholic everybody said, but they were serious, they were earnest, they were bright. They thought it was a great profession. I thought we had a range of things to do and people to talk to us, so yeah, I was satisfied. But still you have to remember that I kind of grew up in the Foreign Service, so nothing about it either surprised me or disgusted me. I think a lot of people had a culture shock, so if they didn't like something it was a blow to them; none of that for me. I mean I was going to go on, I

was going to work hard. Let me do one follow-up. I don't want to exaggerate on how debonair I was about coming into the Foreign Service. I can remember that summer working on the Pakistan-Afghanistan desk. I could be earnest too. I remember, my Dad had retired in April when he was 60 out of Madras where he was Consul General, and he was passing through the Department doing his de-briefing and I think also taking IVP (International Visitor Program) groups around the country or something. I remember he came into the office when I was in there one time and was sitting with me. At a certain point he looked at me and said, "For God's sake smile." So I think there was a little uncertainty there, a little earnestness. Also I was sort of into my first job. I was given the job because the previous fall had been the Sino-Indian War that had caused a big crack...

Q: '62.

SIMONS: '62 and this was the summer of '63. It caused a big crack in our relationship with Pakistan, so I was given a job by Turner Cameron, who was the Director of the office at that time. I think it was still SOA (Office of South Asian Affairs). Carol Laise was the Deputy. She used to go out every Wednesday and get her hair fixed, but that was her only concession to gender at that time. But Turner Cameron gave me the job of researching the records to find out what we had told the Pakistanis about what we were doing with the Indians. So it was kind of a research job. I did it with a kind of earnestness; it had a high policy aspect too. But in general, back to the original point, I was more relaxed about the Foreign Service and working in foreign affairs than a lot of other new people.

Q: How about in your A-100 course, minorities or gender at this time?

SIMONS: I think there was gender. There were a couple of young women. I don't remember them particularly. I don't remember minorities, maybe one Hispanic. I remember an Italian (Frank Tonini). No, I don't remember minorities.

Q: It just wasn't part of it.

SIMONS: It wasn't part of it. In gender, yeah, there were women. I think there were three or four. It was a presence that you were aware of.

Q: You got out of there in '63 and you went to the India-Pakistan desk?

SIMONS: It was the Pakistan-Afghanistan desk of the South Asia Division of the Near Eastern Bureau, that's what it was.

Q: How long did you do that?

SIMONS: Till September: July, August, September. Then I went off with Duke Ellington until November. That was exciting.

Q: How did this go in that area? I know when going to the Soviet Union this was really something because everybody there listened to jazz. What about where you went? This is not a jazz area.

SIMONS: No, except for the elites. In the report that I wrote, having come back early and having time on my hands in early December after we came back after the assassination and before my marriage on December 23rd, one of the things I said was that we are preaching to the converted. I didn't think the U.S. taxpayer should spend that amount of money -- because it was a lot of money for those days -- basically entertaining the elites of this part of the world who'd learn to love jazz at Oxford and Cambridge. I thought we should send smaller groups and more modern groups, people who could jam with musicians out there. There is a sequel to that since we have time. When I was at Stanford…

Q: This is after retirement?

SIMONS: After retirement, in 2001. A young colleague out there who was writing up his thesis on diplomatic history and is now at Wisconsin (and even later now at Texas, Jeremy Suri) said, "Are you the Tom Simons who was with the Duke Ellington Orchestra?" I said, "I am, but how did you know?" He said, "Well there is this article here in an edited work on the use of culture during the Cold War, it's by a female historian in Michigan named Penny von Eschen, and she of course is quite critical of this exploitation of black music to win the Cold War, but she really likes you." I said, "Well let me look at the article." For this article she had gone down to the Fulbright Archives in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and fished out the records of the old cultural programs which are down there under the Fulbright program and fished out my report in which I had complained about all this money for preaching to the converted. But I had also cited musicians in the Ellington orchestra who were frustrated because they couldn't get closer to the people. In other words, the same complaint but from their mouths. And I said I didn't disagree with them. And in her article she had called me their "progressive African-American escort" because her assumption was that if I had these views I had to be black. So I called her up at Michigan and I said, "I'm really flattered but I'm really not." She was abashed. She actually later came and interviewed me in Cambridge. She does have an African-American husband, and she was apologetic for what she'd written, to the point where she also got me a record of what I had written. At some point I may write on that.

Q: Did you find that this Indo-China war was sort of a real change for a while in our relations with India? I mean we're back to when you were on the Pakistan desk.

SIMONS: The India-China war?

Q: The India-China war, yes. All of a sudden because we gave support to the Indian Government and gave them some equipment, and all that was probably the only time during almost the whole Cold War that we really were rather close to India.

SIMONS: Yeah, and there was a lot of hopefulness because the relationship had been so bad. There was the quandary of course on what to do with Pakistan with whom we had developed a close relationship on an anti-Communist basis. So there was an effort to sort of deal with both. But we were pleased that India even asked for assistance and that we were able to give it. Then we did try to turn mediator after the war. We did try to resolve the India-Pakistan dilemma by doing a mediation on Kashmir. That took place in '63, '64. It failed miserably. Then the window, such as it was, was closing because I think the amount of assistance that we were giving them was not enough to win their loyalty on any kind of durable basis.

Q: Given Nehru and all of his wariness, that didn't seem in the cards, but maybe it was.

SIMONS: Yeah, but Indo-China came to an end in '54 and then the Geneva Conference was '55. Oh no, you're talking about the Sino-Indian war.

Q: But I was saying Indo-China, they have different names, Sino-Indian.

SIMONS: But then the Pakistanis provoked the 1965 war. I think there is some feeling among historians that they really did feel that maybe it was a last chance for them, because if U.S. relations with India continued to improve they would never again be in as good a position to force India to the negotiating table on Kashmir. After that we lost interest. Remember it was the Soviets who mediated the return of the status quo at Tashkent in 1965.

Q: You were only with the Pakistan-Afghan desk for a short time.

SIMONS: Two months.

Q: Then where did you go?

SIMONS: I did Ellington.

Q: Then after Ellington?

SIMONS: After Ellington I signed on as a Secretary of Delegation, as it was called, for a large delegation that was being assembled in the Office of the Special Trade Representative that was attached to the White House. It's the only time I ever served outside the Department. STR it was called. It is now called USTR. It was then lodged in the wing of the Old Executive Office Building where my Dad had first served when he came into the State Department in 1945. So there was that kind of nice feeling about it. Secretary of Delegation is basically an admin job, an administrative job. It organizes the secretaries and the payroll and the equipment. This was in January…well it was after FSI (Foreign Service Institute)…so it was in March of 1964, I'd say. I was married. Peggy had come down to Washington. We were living in a little basement apartment across from the Chastleton at 15th and R with a prostitute on the first floor. It was a roughish kind of neighborhood, but we liked it. There was no immediate prospect that the

delegation would go anytime soon, so it was basically a Washington job for the better part of a year, although I took a trip in May over to Geneva to start preparing the office space. That's where I met Winston Lord, because he was on the same delegation. Christian Herter, a great gentleman, was a Republican working for the Johnson Administration as the Special Trade Representative.

Q: This is Christian Herter Jr.?

SIMONS: No, Christian Herter Jr. is the son; Christian Herter the father was a former Secretary of State. He had a bad leg that hindered his movements around. He had two deputies. One was in Washington, a man named William Roth, and the other was in Geneva, Michael Blumenthal, who had been a coffee negotiator and had come in under the Kennedy Administration and was then tagged as the negotiator in Geneva whenever we got to Geneva. We didn't get to Geneva until January of 1965, so I spent 1964 in Washington really learning trade economics.

Q: This is the Kennedy Round?

SIMONS: It was the Kennedy Round of Tariff and Trade Negotiations in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). Kennedy was gone but the Round was there, and the delegation was assembling. The U.S. had a very large delegation, 50 people broken down into teams. There was one for the EEC, the European Economic Community as it was then, there was one for Japan, there was one for Canada, there was one for kind of the rest of the world. Its situation was defined by John Rooney, I think, as the head of the House Appropriations Committee.

Q: Oh yeah, he was the God as far as the State Department and its appropriations were concerned. Kind of a horrible man, but…

SIMONS: …there were advantages: he didn't believe that for delegations you should assign people so they could bring their wives. He thought people worked better if they were by themselves without families. Here was a delegation that was going out, that finally left in '65, and it was going for years because the deadline set by the enabling legislation was in mid-1967. So all of us were rolling in money because we were getting $16.00 a day per diem for every day we were in Geneva, and all of us brought our families, paid for it out of our own pockets. I think for the next Tokyo Round they assigned people; they had learned their lesson. It was a real drain on the taxpayer because of John Rooney's foible, but it was a great honeymoon assignment for me and Peggy because we didn't have children. So we spent two and a half glorious years in Geneva. In the middle of it, at a certain point like a hole in a doughnut, the French walked out because they was having trouble with the EEC. It was not trouble over the Kennedy Round, but it was the famous year of the "empty chair" in European Common Market politics. Of course our negotiation ground to a halt. We younger people were delighted. Peggy and I took off. We hitchhiked all over Central and Western Europe in those days without children; it was great. She got her French down. She went to the Interpreters' School at Geneva University. That would have been '65: the back row of her class was

all Chinese from mainland China, as we used to call it, and one day they just disappeared, they just evaporated. We then read that they had all been called home, but in order to preserve their chances of staying alive they'd all gotten off the train in Moscow and demonstrated and got beaten and arrested, so that their Cultural Revolution credentials gave them something to go on when they finally got back to China. So, mid-'60s. During that period the senior officers went crazy, because they had a year with nothing to do. I remember they used to come in on the weekends and read traffic. All the things that…you know, the Foreign Service culture.

Q: You were almost a GSO.

SIMONS: No, that was just for the first nine months, and then Blumenthal decided to change his special assistant and offered me the job. It was quite wonderful because he called me in, he said, "Would you like to be my special assistant?" And I said, "No." Later on, at a later point, he said, "You know when I asked you to be my special assistant you really turned white." I said, "Yeah, when I turned you down you really turned white." He said, "Could I ask you why?" I said, "Sure, because my Dad was a line officer and I want to be a line officer. I figure if I'm smart enough and if I can work hard and be patriotic I'll do okay." Now I said, "I know that staff people do better because I've seen them operate in the Department, but most of them I haven't liked, and I don't think that's the way I want to serve. I want to get ahead on merit." Blumenthal looked over at me and he said, "Tom, that's very wise. That's very sound. But I think you will find as you move along that knowing people is part of merit." So that was his lesson and I finally took the job. So I was his special assistant in the office right across from him during that year. But of course it was a slow year.

Q: What were you learning economics and trade-wise?

SIMONS: I was learning about trade economics. I was learning about production, percentages of production and consumption. I ran a weekly newsletter of the whole economic press of Europe that I produced for the delegation, French, German and English, all of which I read. People sort of enjoyed that. I learned how the economic system works. I learned when trade is damaging, what the opportunities are. I did studies. I remember during that slow year they put me on special projects. One was Mexico and the GATT, because Mexico was for all those years not a member of the GATT.

Q: GATT being the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

SIMONS: It was the predecessor of the WTO, today's World Trade Organization. I did a paper on world meat trade for which I learned about Australian and New Zealand interests and about our Western cattle lobby and the meat lobby. You get a sensitivity to the way trade impacts and the way trade is negotiated. It was most of my foreign affairs economics education until I started dealing with Communist countries, where you get into a different kind of economics and politics.

Q: What was the Kennedy Round about from the perspective of the Americans?

SIMONS: The Kennedy Round was an effort really to do away with tariffs as significant obstacles to trade in what might be the last era of U.S. industrial superiority. In other words, we were in the best shape in the world at that point and with Japan and Europe recovering we were unlikely ever to be in better shape to benefit from reductions that eliminated tariffs as a major obstacle. It was largely successful, I think. It brought tariffs down by ½ to 2/3. In many cases they were replaced by other barriers. In other words…

Q: Subsidies.

SIMONS: Subsidies, or health standards that protect German beer, protect the German market from our beer, and more recently it's been genetic modification, all of those things. We had a bunch of our own. American Selling Price for chemicals was big at that point. Our tariffs were assessed on an invented cost, an American selling price, a system that was designed to shut out most of the European chemicals and did. So that was a tough negotiation. Agriculture was a tremendous problem because the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy was already in place and hard to get at because it's not a tariff barrier. Anyway you learned about all of those things. You learned about trade wars. We had just come off a chicken war.

Q: Oh, this was very big, particularly in the Netherlands.

SIMONS: Yeah, the Netherlands and France and Israel. There was a great joke about Israel. But the reason was we were the first country to have a mass chicken industry up and running, and the Europeans were coming in behind us and wanted to protect their infant industry. We retaliated against Volkswagen buses and cognac and all their specialty products. So I learned a lot. I was never uncomfortable with economics after that assignment.

Q: Did you learn about negotiating styles in different countries or…?

SIMONS: Yeah, I mean, you had the nascent negotiating style of the Europeans, what is now the European Union. It was a work in progress, and it was always kind of a shifting target because it was the first major negotiation where the EEC Commission spoke for all the Member States. What they were negotiating was the Common External Tariff, which was a fairly recent tariff. They didn't yet have all the social insurance and labor mobility provisions, that whole apparatus of the European Union that came later. Most of what the European Union was at the time was a Common External Tariff, and that was what they were negotiating, so it was hard for them. It was not typical. What was more typical was negotiating with Japan or Scandinavia, because they were like us. Although you did have EFTA, the European Free Trade Association, even at that time, which included Britain and Scandinavia. What I learned, I mean the clearest memory that I carried away, you did learn about national characteristics of civil services. You learned how the Germans were different from the Italians and the French.

Q: How would you?

SIMONS: Well, the French had this glorious old civil service that went back to the early modern period. It was highly self-conscious, highly educated, and it kept the country going during the whole postwar Fourth Republic. You were now under the Fifth Republic. But the French had a glorious tradition of self-confidence, were creative, were bold. The Germans, by contrast, still had a civil service that had been gathered from what the provincial Minister Presidents would give to the Federal Government when the Federal Republic was founded in 1949. So you still had a fairly low quality of civil servant in the Federal Government. Germany also had a great civil service tradition, but it was going to take another generation or two to recreate that, so you had insecure and not very well educated officials. You had some wonderful experts. We were friends with an expert who didn't have a college degree, and he was really, really good and really smart. So you've got those national cells. You've got a kind of blitheness with the Italians, a sort of the devil-may-care approach, not very serious about detail.

The one thing I got as a major difference between Europe as such and the United States was that the Europeans tended to watch a very few issues very closely. In other words they would prioritize and identify the few things that they really cared about, and they were really watchdogs on that. The guy who was the French delegation -- they didn't have a Frenchman on the European Commission, but delegations formed the national watchdog committee that met in Geneva to ride herd on the Commission delegation – was actually a Vietnamese by birth, and he remains a friend of mine today who is over seventy and retired. Later he joined the Commission and became the European Union's ambassador in Paris. He was in the country when the French war ended in 1954 and as a Vietnamese Frenchman, he chose France. I would watch him, and he was defending every French interest like a tiger, but there were only a few. Whereas the U.S. delegation, 50 people, computer equipped, huge, followed everything.

Q: This is tape 2, side 1 with Tom Simons.

SIMONS: Everything was a printout, and moreover we furnished everybody with statistics, and this is in the days before electronic computers. A lot of those we had were electrical. The old electrical adding and dividing machines, calculators they were called. We worked on those. We filled wastebaskets with the stuff, and at the end when we reached the agreement I had the job of producing two copies for every delegation down at the Xerox office with this ancient copying machinery, which we then carried in dollies up to the delegation room. I guess you could say it is the difference between a global power and a regional power – maybe that's just the way it's become recently - but we really did sort of take responsibility for the whole negotiation. The other countries were much more targeted, and I'm not so sure they were worse off.

Q: Of course we've got the problem we run across all the time, a country like France can decide which company is going to get the contract in Egypt and concentrate on that. We're stuck with Lockheed, Martin and Boeing and what have you.

SIMONS: We're competitive.

Q: We can't allow ourselves to pick which we feel is the best and I'm sure in our delegation, I mean if it's peanuts we had a representative for peanuts.

SIMONS: That's true. We not only have a global power position, we have a full service economy. But it goes back further than that. I can remember reading in A. J. P. Taylor's wonderful diplomatic history The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, his comments on diplomatic style. One of them pointed out that the French were probably the best diplomats, the best prepared, the sharpest, the smartest, but they tended to have only one issue, which was Alsace-Lorraine annexed by Germany, the blue line of the Vosges: everything circled around that one issue. So that extreme prioritization is something that goes back a long way in French practice.

Q: First place, the whole idea of the tariff: tariffs by this time were no longer seen by anybody as a means of raising revenue. Were they or not?

SIMONS: Well, I don't think so at this point. In other words I think the sources of government revenue had expanded, the tax systems had been reformed. Other tax systems were much more dependent on indirect taxes than ours. A typical European tax system is very different that way. I don't think that tariffs were considered important parts of government revenue, so I think that is one of the reasons why governments felt they could afford to do tariff reduction. It's unlike for instance the liquor monopolies in Communist countries.

Q: This is where you make your money.

SIMONS: Yeah, and there are no ready alternatives, and that's why when Gorbachev launched his anti-alcohol campaign in his early years in the '80s, one of the reasons it became such a problem was because it beggared the government, caused a huge loss of revenue. I think maybe some of the underdeveloped countries have excises that are still important for them.

Q: How did you find the Japanese at that point? They were just coming up, weren't they?

SIMONS: They were just coming up. They have since gone beyond, but it was still the time of the huge Japanese delegation composed of representatives of every Japanese ministry: all watching each other, and all solidary in face of foreigners, which meant they said very little. It was almost impossible to get a decision out of them. It took months for them to work out their internal positions, but then when they did work out an internal position it could come very swiftly and be very bold. That was the Japanese negotiating style. I've worked with Japanese over the years and they have gone beyond that at the margin, but I think that probably is still Japanese negotiation style.

Q: How about the Brits?

SIMONS: The Brits (British) were not yet in the Common Market, they were still outside, and they'd suffered their veto.

Q: By De Gaulle.

SIMONS: By De Gaulle, after the Nassau meeting, I guess in '63 under Kennedy, so they were not in, and the French weren't anxious for them to be in. De Gaulle was still there, so the French weren't anxious to have them there. So they were independent. They needed tariff reductions as an industrial producer. They were contributory. They were smaller, they were leaner and smarter than we were, not quite to the French level, but they were bigger than the French and had more interests to represent. Yeah, they were good. Roy Denman, who was later the British, I think Commissioner for External Affairs once they joined what became the EC, who was certainly the EC representative in Washington for many years, was prominent in the British delegation.

Q: You were doing this when to when?

SIMONS: '65 to '67. From January of '65 when we went to Geneva until the agreement was signed in July of '67.

Q: Were you getting while you were there, either personally or through delegations, any reverberations to what was happening in Vietnam?

SIMONS: Yeah, sure. It was not really from delegations, because it was after all mainly a negotiation about industrial tariffs, so it was mainly our European, Canadian, and Japanese allies we heard from. It was sort of a disquiet and a fear that we'd be distracted by Vietnam, but you didn't get into arguments over the rights and wrongs of Vietnam. You got those arguments within the American delegation, because with a 50-person delegation you get them; you know, Vietnam was a real weight on all our thoughts and all, I will say, our consciousnesses. It was something we talked about. Most people didn't quite know what to think. I can remember I knew what I thought because I can remember where it took place. I was with another member of our delegation, a friend, on the night after we had begun bombing in February of 1965, so it was a month after we got to Geneva that the bombing began. We were at a party overlooking the Jet d'Eau, the fountain in the middle of Lake Geneva, one of the most beautiful places in the world; and I can remember telling him that I didn't think Communism was a gift to give to anybody, so it wasn't a question of who is right and who is wrong, but I just didn't think we could win this war. I told him I just don't think a war like this is going to get the kind of support that it needs from the American body politic, and that was the way it always seemed to me.

Q: While you were doing these negotiations, was the Soviet Union sort of like a black hole or a presence there?

SIMONS: No, it was over the horizon.

Q: But I mean was there any influence?

SIMONS: No, you'd been through the Cuban Missile Crisis, that had happened three years before. We all lived through that, and then for something like this the Soviet Union was not on the screen. You had Czechoslovakia later.

Q: That came in '68.

SIMONS: Yeah, but Czechoslovakia was a member of GATT. It had a suspended membership in GATT. It was not present. Poland wanted to get into GATT, but they basically didn't fit, because these were non-tariff countries. Their trade was regulated not by tariffs but by other things, and they were not big traders. They didn't bulk very large in the world trading system. The closest I got was a Swiss friend who had a color-printing outfit. He was my age and setting up in business. He'd bought a flatbed color printer from the Czechs and was trying to make that work. But they were pretty distant in those days. It was not a presence. Certainly not there, and I think not in the consciousness of most of us.

Q: How about the Canadians? The Canadians, when you get to trade particularly in those days, were not inconsequential.

SIMONS: They're huge. They're our biggest single trading partner, and they were then. They were big in everything. They're big in agriculture, they're big in lumber, timber, paper, and of course huge in auto parts. There was also the issue, I think, of intellectual property, I remember it being -- or I learned of it being -- an issue for them, the fear of being overwhelmed by American intellectual production.

Q: I mean this is a big thing, the fact that we put our ads in their magazines and everybody read the Saturday Evening Post or what have you.

SIMONS: Yeah, so there was a little bit of protectionism there, which you could understand. But I think the big issue was auto parts, and I think it was during the Kennedy Round that you came to the agreement on auto parts that was basically a market-sharing kind of agreement, and it was sort of a breakthrough. I'm not sure on that looking back. Yeah, Canada was large. We had a very large team to negotiate with them, and they were tough to negotiate with. They were tough defenders of their commercial interests, and we knew it was important to them. It was important to us too because of the volume of trade.

Q: This went on until '67.

SIMONS: Summer of '67.

Q: By that time what had happened?

SIMONS: Well, you had an agreement that was to be passed into law by the national parliaments that fall. Basically it was before our authority ran out, so that the President could put it into law without having to take it back to Congress and have it picked apart. I mean that's the nature of the trade negotiation authority. It provided for very substantial tariff reductions and for some reduction in non-tariff barriers too, but it was mainly a tariff agreement. What it did was it clear the way for every other round to concentrate on non-tariff barriers rather than tariffs because they became, I think with the Kennedy Round, pretty insignificant. That was an achievement.

Q: Well then, when you left there you felt pretty good?

SIMONS: Yeah, I felt good. We had a grand time. We hadn't saved any money. Some of our more frugal colleagues saved enough to buy a house. We didn't, partly because ever since I'd come into the Foreign Service I wanted to go to Poland.

POLAND I: 1967-1971

Q: Why?

SIMONS: Well, just sort of bits and pieces of a whole life. I think it's the heroic underdog thing about the Poles that I remembered. I can remember as a child in Calcutta watching the movie, it was the year I was seven, an old black-and-white movie of the destruction of Warsaw by the Germans in 1939, the Stukas screaming down and Chopin playing in the background. I can remember that.

Q: Warsaw Concerto.

SIMONS: Yeah, wow. I can remember reading a Penguin book my Dad had about heroic Poland when I was a teenager, maybe 14. Then when you go study in Vienna, Vienna is kind of an eastern city -- it's the second largest Czech city, it's the second largest Hungarian city – and once you're in Vienna you're already kind of in Eastern Europe. So when we got into the Foreign Service I'd started naming Poland on my wish list. Kennedy Round service was something that people wanted to reward you for. I'm not sure we deserved it, but the system tried to get you what you wanted, so they gave me Warsaw. In '67 we came back. Peggy was pregnant with our first child. We moved into a little apartment in Georgetown at 25th and Q and walked across Key Bridge every morning to the new FSI building.

Q: This is not in the garage.

SIMONS: This is after the move from Arlington Towers.

Q: From the Towers, right.

SIMONS: It was a new building. It seemed bright, spanky and modern for us.

Q: You remember the cafeteria, though.

SIMONS: Wonderful cafeteria, good food. I remember the beef, the way they cut it off the thing. A wonderful course that we loved. Our baby was born on May 10. Peggy kept walking across Key Bridge there until the other guys at her Polish table were afraid that her water would break and that she would cause a crisis there; but she didn't. Our little girl Suzanne was born in Washington Hospital Center. We learned good Polish, both of us. Wonderful teachers: Krystyna Malinowska was a brilliant teacher for many, many years there, and became a friend.

Q: What were you picking up about Poland from your teachers? The instructor is often your first entrée into the country and all that.

SIMONS: Heroic, stubborn and constantly betrayed. I think those epithets would do it. They all had histories of '56. Krystyna had come after '56. They could remember the Warsaw Uprising when the city was destroyed by the Germans in 1944. So stories of heroism and betrayal were sort of the staple, but there was also the partly successful heroism of '56 and Poland's relative liberalism, for instance a Church that had some autonomous role, a mainly private agriculture. Then in March of '68 while we were still in the course you had the student riots in Warsaw, and the crackdown that was still something that we faced when we got there, because it included a wave of anti-Semitism, which we'd never had any living experience with. A little bit of American social anti-Semitism, maybe, a little bit in Germany when I was a student there, but not as the political factor that we found in Poland. So: turbulent, heroic, betrayed, unpredictable.

Q: You went to Poland when?

SIMONS: In August of '68. We drove from Geneva. We took our baby in her carry seat, picked up a new Volvo station wagon – we had diplomatic prices in Geneva -- and drove from Geneva to Warsaw across Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia the Prague Spring was in full throttle still. There had been these enormous maneuvers, and very tough negotiations with the Soviets were clearly still going on. While we were in Geneva and paid our first visit to Czechoslovakia, a vacation visit in 1967, we had met a Czech boy with his Scottish pen pal in a Prague restaurant, and we had remained friends. In 1968 he was active in his home town of Ceske Budejovice, and on the liberal side. We met him first there and then in Prague which is where his family was from, and we went to Free Speech Corner, which was this wonderful square there beside the main drag where the whole world was coming to participate in the Czech experiment. It was like the springtime of the peoples. It was the most exhilarating experiment and experience for us to get this feeling of freedom.

Everybody came including French revolutionaries from May 1968 when you had had the great revolt in Paris. I can remember one of them in sandals talking to a Czech bureaucrat who was on his way home from the office in his suit, clearly with the remains of his lunch in his briefcase. Their common language was English, and this young Frenchman was trying to convince the Czech that Castro had it right and you had to send the

bureaucrats out to cut sugarcane, and that Mao had it right, that you had to teach people to be close to the working class. The Czech kept replying that what they needed instead was technology and higher productivity in the economy. Finally he looked at this young Frenchman and said wearily, "Young man, you do not understand." That was kind of a lesson too. But that was the 14th of August, and we went on to Poland on the 15th. We moved into the Economic Counselor's house. He was on vacation. We were awakened on the 21st by the Polish planes taking off from Okecie Airport and overflying Warsaw on the way to join the invasion of Czechoslovakia; so that happened six days later.

Q: Yeah, I want to cover that, but first what job were you going to when you went to Warsaw?

SIMONS: I went into the Consular Section and I did NIV's, I did visitors' visas.

Q: Who was our ambassador?

SIMONS: Our ambassador was a new ambassador who came with me, Walter Stoessel, and he'd just arrived. The DCM was Walter Jenkins, who was an old China hand who ended up I think in Frankfurt, and then he was replaced by Eugene Boster, who ended up in Bangladesh and I think Guatemala. We had very talented group of young people, many who went on to do good things. You still had the system in those days of putting most of the new people in the Consular Section and making them compete with each other for jobs in the Economic and Political Sections. I was in that situation. But the year I spent in Consular was one of the best years of my Foreign Service experience.

Q: I ran the Consular Section in Belgrade in the early '60s and I had young FSO's like David Anderson, Tom Niles on their first tour.

SIMONS: We had Jack Mendelsohn and Norman Terrell, things happened to them later and they left the Service, but they were very, very talented people. It was also an interesting period in Consular. The Poles were issuing passports to people who wanted to come to the United States, and we were just at the tail end of the period where we felt that any person in a Communist country -- maybe Yugoslavia was an exception -- but where any person in Poland who got a passport should get a visa because it was a Communist country. It was just in my time that we started to look at all of these people coming on invitations from janitor women in Chicago who made $2500 a year. We got a big map of Chicago and started putting pins in as to how many visa applications and started cracking down on what was actually a fraud operation.

Q: Yugoslavia at that time, just slightly before, the Yugoslavs were usually applying en masse, but we were just refusing them.

SIMONS: We started to do that in my time. But, Stu, the good thing about it was that we had about 20 interviews a day, and they were in the office, and you would sit down with a person and you could ask them questions. Not only did I learn excellent Polish that way but I learned about a slice of humanity that I'd never had any contact with before, the

peasantry, because most of them were from Galicia, southern Poland, because most of the Polish immigration to the United States were peasants from there, and they were the people who invited their relatives to visit. So it was also a social education.

Q: What was the political situation in relations with the United States at that particular time?

SIMONS: Well, it was terrible, because it was a very turbulent time in a Communist political system. Relations with the United States were almost shut down. We had almost no relations. You had the repression of the students, you had the anti-Semitism going on, you had police pressure, you had persecution of liberals. You had Jews flowing out, and Jews got their first interview in the Warsaw Embassy before they were processed through to Vienna where the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) took charge of them. The Soviets were paranoid over West Germans trying to suborn Czechoslovakia. The ostensible excuse for the invasion of Czechoslovakia was to keep them from being subverted by West Germans; there was paranoia in the political system. So we had almost no relations. There were no high-level visits. You had a consular operation that continued, but you had almost no political relations of any kind. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia there was a practical shutdown in international relations that lasted a year until the Budapest conference. It put off SALT negotiations for a year, the strategic arms negotiations that had been agreed to but which were then postponed until late 1969. It was during that year that we MIRVed our strategic forces, introduced Multiple, Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicles, so you had a proliferation cost to that year of hiatus.

Q: Well, here you are, you're brand-new to Poland and all of a sudden Poland embarks on invasion. This is along with the other countries of the Warsaw Pact. What was the reaction of the Embassy?

SIMONS: Well, it was disgust, which Poles themselves also felt. Although we also learned that they didn't much like Czechs and the Czechs didn't much like them. You get sort of traditional national antipathies within the Communist bloc. They mainly felt embarrassed about it, but they also felt that they -- and we understood why as a satellite -- that they didn't have any choice. Romania had a choice; Ceausescu refused to join the invasion and we admired him. That was one of the bases for our relationship with Romania later on. But the Poles didn't have a choice and in retrospect it's also clear that for Gomulka it was very important at that point to win Soviet favor, because it was really the invasion of Czechoslovakia that led the Soviet Union to support him against the people who are contesting his authority within the Polish Party. The worst anti-Semites were Polish Communist nationalists. They were sort of red browns, fascist-leaning. By joining the invasion of Czechoslovakia Gomulka got the Soviet support that he needed to calm all that down. At the Party conference or congress in November he brought in a whole new set of Young Turks, a lot of new people in the leadership, and they were his clients, they were technocrats. So we understood that kind of thing. We also had, Stu, if you remember, it was the year of assassinations for us here. It was Dr. King, and we were

here. My wife and I, she was pregnant. I can remember we took a bus out of Washington for New York and watched the smoke rise over the H and 7th Street corridors.

Q: I remember driving up Wisconsin Boulevard and seeing troops with bayonets in the streets of Georgetown.

SIMONS: Georgetown was under curfew, tanks in the streets.

Q: It was something I never thought I'd ever see.

SIMONS: Well, it was an America that we weren't used to. We didn't run screaming from the cities, but it was a turbulent time. Warsaw was different. That September Peggy and I and our four-month old baby in her pram went to visit the party commemoration of the outbreak of World War II. It wasn't being held outdoors because of the political situation, but in a hall that is the ice skating rink. We were dressed in casual clothes with our baby in a pram, and we walked right into the hall just in time to see the whole Polish Politburo stand up, stand up and sing the Internationale. We then came out the corridor and went back around to the back exit, and we stood there with some security people and a few gawkers and watched the whole Politburo walk right past us five feet away to their cars, and we were never checked. This is a time when major American political figures were being assassinated, and it really did make you think that they had their law-and-order situation under control.

Q: People that were in the Embassy when the invasion happened, had they been expecting the Poles to do it or did it come as a surprise?

SIMONS: We weren't expecting the invasion at first. I asked Stoessel. Stoessel had been Deputy Assistant Secretary in Washington responsible for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I said, "What was your feeling?" He said, "Well, we had been so afraid that they would invade so often for so long that when they got to their meeting at Cierna nad Tisou, and it looked as if they worked things out at that point, we kind of dropped our guard; so it came as a surprise."

Q: That's when Dubcek went to meet Brezhnev…

SIMONS: Went out to the border town, with I think his Politburo, to meet Brezhnev's. We thought it was over. So we were taken aback at the invasion, and so the question whether the Poles would join I don't think came up. Maybe earlier in Washington in the contingency planning. But then when it happened I don't think anybody was really surprised. I think the surprise was rather that the Romanians didn't join. That's the way it was.

Q: Did this have any effect on your visa issuance or not?

SIMONS: No, but it had an effect on our social life, because it made Poles wary of you and it made you kind of wary of Poles. Norman Terrell had been there a year before me

and he had a friend, a young lawyer, who started coming to sit in the vestibule of the USIS library waiting for him to come so he could talk to him: an obvious police spy. So you were real careful about whom you met, and you built friendships really quite slowly. You were invited to parties. It's a society in which the police are kind of a presence, but not everyone is a policeman, so there's that ambiguity. You knew that in Belgrade.

Q: Was there any movement of sort of intellectuals going to the United States or vice versa, visa-wise?

SIMONS: Not in that first year, because the exchange programs shut down. There were Jews leaving, including intellectuals, and some were on their way to the United States. But there were few others.

Q: Were they just told "you're Jewish, get out," or what happened? How did this work?

SIMONS: Well, I think it's hard to tell. I think they were made to feel unwanted, especially within the Party, because a lot of them had been Party people. There were 25,000 or so Jews left in Poland in 1968. That's not many, and they had chosen to stay at the end of the war; after the decimation, after the Holocaust, there were about a quarter of a million. They had gone in the two big waves, one right after the war and then after '56, so the ones who left in '68 were people who had chosen to stay even though the ground was soaked in Jewish blood. So a lot of it was a Party thing.

I can remember an incident that's sort of wonderful if you like porn sort of stories. The State Secretary in the West German Foreign Ministry was a guy named Duckwitz. He was a Social Democratic protégé -- it was the time of the Grand Coalition -- but he had a duelling scar too; a big guy. He went to our Ambassador and it was a Nixon ambassador, Kenneth Rush, at the time, and said, "I want you to do something for my friend Katz-Suchy who is in Poland. He's being persecuted and he wants to go to the United States." So this message came through from our Embassy in Bonn and went to our DCM. He called me in and he said, "Tom, you want to do something for Katz-Suchy." I said, "Well let me look him up." So I went down to the files and got his out. He was an old Communist, Jewish to be sure, but he had been to New York, the Polish ambassador at the UN (United Nations) in the late '40s, and he was a sidekick of Vishinsky's, the former purge prosecutor who was Soviet UN ambassador, very tough on the Americans.

Q: Who was the great persecutor of Bukharin et al.

SIMONS: Yeah, but now it was in the early Cold War, and Katz-Suchy followed along, cutting and sarcastic. So I said to the DCM, "Well look, I'm going back on leave, so let me talk about it in the Department." So I went back to the Department, because I didn't want to cross my DCM, and it was going to be my decision. I nosed around the Department. I said, "Would you mind if I turned Katz-Suchy down?" They said, "No, no, we'll support you." So I went back and I turned him down. Because my thought was -- I got into arguments with people about it – that just because someone is Jewish doesn't

mean he deserves an American visa if he was a swine, if the record shows that he was a swine. I turned him down and it stuck. He found an academic post in Denmark.

Q: Did you find in the visa thing that we were running across people who had been in the Party, and you had to prove that they had disavowed the Party through some overt act?

SIMONS: No, we weren't that rigid. You had to make your judgments on that. I mean you didn't want to make them perjure themselves. We were past the stage at that point where they had to disavow the Party by some overt act. Somebody who had been seen as a Party official and who was leaving and was Jewish was often what you're dealing with. The other thing that you saw was lots of simple people being scarfed up in this. I mean leather workers from towns in Silesia. That made you sad, and it made you angry at Poles. I mean, hey, if this sort of thing is going to be used in political fights, innocent people get hurt. We also figured out, however, that as with every group, not all of these people were admirable. I can remember Ryszard Bakst, who was a great pianist. In fact when I came back to Poland as Ambassador in 1990 he was also back as a judge at the Chopin festival that is held every five years. But back when he emigrated in the 1960s he was haranguing our consular people there because he thought it was an obligation of the U.S. Government to ship his two pianos out and pay for it. So anyway you find that it takes all kinds.

Q: Did you get any feel while you were there for the Soviet influence and all?

SIMONS: Well, it was kind of murky because the Soviets, it was like standoff weapons. You didn't see them. It wasn't sort of overt. I mean they had influence on things, and you knew they were involved, but you just got very intermittent and actually suspicious signs of where the Soviets were. I can remember after the workers' revolt on the coast in 1970, how a man who I knew -- he had been one of the first Eisenhower Fellows in the U.S. -- sort of called me up -- at that time I was in the Political Section -- and recounted how during the workers' revolt Gomulka had called Moscow for support and had been told that he had a problem with his own working class, and he should work it out. Well, some version of that obviously happened, but this guy was so obviously a secret policeman that you had to take it with a grain of salt. It was very hard to get to where the Soviets were at that point. They were not a strong overt presence. They had troops in Legnica. They had a base and a couple of divisions down there, but their 31 divisions were in East Germany rather than Poland. During the troubles of '68 you sent your military attaches out on the road looking for them, and again in 1970 to find out whether they were shifting troops around or something. I think they tried to be pretty discreet, and they actually were pretty discreet. I can remember Ambassador Aristov, who was there in Poland as ambassador twice. I can remember shaking his hand twice in a party, a diplomatic party, he was shaking everybody's hand and not seeing whose hand he was shaking.

Q: Were you able to have any good discussions with Poles?

SIMONS: Yeah, and better as relations got better; better as things settled down; better as relations picked up. I mean we had a big Congressional delegation, I remember, in 1970;

Senator John Sparkman of Alabama led it. I remember it was '70 because it was around the time when Egyptian leader Nasser had just died, and we were talking to Sparkman about what it might mean. So yeah, exchanges picked up. You had special agricultural exchanges, so you had people in the agriculture sector. The head of the Agriculture Department of the Party Central Committee had spent a year on an Iowa farm, for instance.

So yeah, over time you could make friends, and we made real friends. We'd go to parties and talk to people, and people had open houses. I remember liberal Catholics. I remember I was introduced by the DCM to the deputy head of one of the kept Catholic organizations, a Catholic organization set up in 1945 called PAX, that had a very strange relationship with the regime. It wanted to be a party, it wanted to be an ally, but they were believing Catholics, and terribly anti-Semitic, so it wasn't permitted. Anyway, over time I developed a circle of friends, and it was a widening circle of friends, around Warsaw.

For instance, I've always liked this story. We had three American historians there doing research for their theses, and I did a little seminar where we'd bring them over to the house and give them cigarettes and booze, because they didn't have Embassy commissary privileges, and one of us would give a paper and then we would comment on it. It was a little history seminar in Polish history. After a while we started to invite Poles to join us to give talks. So I made friends that way. We had Catholic historians who were writing interesting things. I was friends with Poland's best rural sociologist. Then you would have serious conversations, careful because you weren't sure what kind of connections they had; you had to exercise judgment. It was a great school for judgment. But I can remember one of these Catholic liberal friends telling me laughing -- he was married to a Dutch girl, and he ended up as Polish Consul in Lille in northern France after the change in 1990; we used to go to open house at his place -- and he said to me laughing, "You know I was called down to secret police headquarters and told that you were the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) Station Chief." I said, "What was your response?" He said, "I laughed." So they would tell you things too. That's the sort of thing too that wouldn't happened any other place in the Communist world at that time. So you knew it was a filthy regime, you knew about the anti-Semitism, you knew about the exodus of Jews, you knew about the infighting, but you also knew that this kind of liberality was unique in the Communist world. So it was a lesson in ambiguity. Yugoslavia was like that too but without the Soviet part.

Q: During the '70s somebody who was in Poland was saying he was convinced that there probably were at least three dedicated Marxists in the country.

SIMONS: That was a casualty of Czechoslovakia. Leszek Kolakowski the philosopher, the ex-Stalinist, was still there when we were there. He had secret police in front of his apartment door, terrorizing his young daughter. He left that year, went to Oxford, ended up at Berkeley, which he didn't like and came back to Oxford. It was the Berkeley of the Free Speech Movement, and his first act was to park his car in People's Park, and get death threats for it. Berkeley was too wild for him. I remember talking to him at the 1970

AAASS Convention in Columbus – we were on home leave in Chillicothe (just south of there) – and asking if he thought the radicals there were Stalinists; "no," he exclaimed, "they are unconscious Bakuninists!"

Q: Oh, it was not a great time to go.

SIMONS: Yeah, but he was also the guy who said that after Czechoslovakia, talking about humane socialism or socialism with a human face was like talking about frying snowballs. It really had no purchase at all. That old revisionism that had been so much a question between '56 and '68 was dead. I remember I made a friend because I invited him to the house. He had written a book, he was a professor of philosophy I think, written a book on Herbert Marcuse, and he explained to me that it's critical because (you know) Marcuse is a running dog of this and that. But it was kind of an inquiry about Western thinking that just passed traditional Marxist orthodoxy by, and got published. That was available. Marxism was on life support.

Q: You did visas for a year and then what?

SIMONS: Then I went up to the Political Section. I won one of the lottery tickets.

Q: Who was the head of the Political Section?

SIMONS: Nick Andrews, Nicholas G. Andrews, who never became an ambassador. He was offered Mauritius. He was married to a wonderful Romanian woman. He himself had been a boy in Romania and married a friend of his youth. He had been back to Romania on the Allied Control Commission right after the war. His father had been in Romania too. Anyway, he was the Political Counselor, and he ended up as the DCM in Warsaw in the Solidarity period, but he never got an ambassadorship because the things they were offering him like Mauritius were too far away from Romania, and she still had family there. He was a wonderful man, a gentleman, a wonderful background.

Q: What was the focus of the Political Section when you were there?

SIMONS: Well, it was the warming U.S.-Polish relationship, which I considered unimportant as hell. Secondarily it was internal political: what was going on in the system. There were two of us doing that, I was the junior guy. I spent the first year as the junior guy and then moved up to the senior.

Q: You were there three years?

SIMONS: I was there three years. That was a great job.

Q: What was the internal issue?

SIMONS: Well, it was the struggle between national Communist and more traditional and more liberal Communist, a kind of tension that was kind of continuing. It settled

down after the Party Congress in November of 1968. It really was a decaying regime, and there was a challenge from the leader of Silesia, Edward Gierek, who had a reputation as a good enough Communist but more as a good industrial manager who was close to the working class. The story of 1969 was the story of an attempt at economic reform that would break the economy out of the stagnation by decentralizing decision-making. It was run by an economic czar who I think was also Gomulka's son-in-law, Jaszczuk. I spent 1969 going around the country and to Silesia and talking around Warsaw about the effects of this economic reform on the working class. I thought that was going to be a problem. In other words I was reporting workers' discontent in Poland beginning in February 1970.

Q: We'll stop here.

Q: Tom, let's see, you were talking about the labor movement and all and looking at this. Put this into perspective. This is before Gierek had made his move or before the workers' revolt.

SIMONS: That had not yet happened. In other words I went up to the Political Section in the fall of 1969. I was number two for that year and then in 1970 I became number one of the two junior officers; there was a three-man Political Section of which the chief did mainly bilateral relations and international aspects. So there were two of us doing internal stuff. In 1968 one of the features of the revolt of the students was that the students had gone to the workers and said, "Join us: It's your fight too," and the workers had not come out. Of course it later transpired that one of the things the Party did was to send anti-Semitic agitators out into the factories, and that may have had an effect. But basically it was a repressive regime and they didn't come out. That sort of rankled. But it was before the workers' revolt. 1968 in Czechoslovakia had not been a workers' revolt. It had been a revolt of the intelligentsia. It was not really until quite late, until actually after the invasion, that the Czechoslovak working class swung behind the reform group.

We Americans are not a country that thinks well in terms of class. We think well in terms of ethnic groups but not well in terms of class. It's not something that poses itself as an analytical problem for us, but it kind of did for me because I thought that at some point -- these people have been industrializing now for 20 years; they have a huge working class; it is a working class formed in the countryside, because the way it was formed was you skimmed the whole natural increase of the Polish countryside into the cities. In 1944 Poland had 26 million people of whom 15 were in the countryside. By 1968 it had 35 million of whom 15 were in the countryside. So that's how the Polish working class was formed. I was sort of aware of this from working in the Consular Section. Anyway, you know, people had been trying these economic reforms, and Westerners had promoted economic reform, partly for subversive reasons as a way of getting at the regime, because we felt that if you get economic reform this would bring on political reforms. That would change the old mentality, but also make life better for people, and also because it would sort of make the regimes admit that the way they were running the economy was not really very good. I said to myself, "You know, if they ever do economic reform it's hard to predict what the outcome is."

So that's what I was sort of watching beginning in '69. You know, talking to people and watching the economic reform program develop. As I travelled in the countryside if I met people, you know coffee shops or talking to the local officials, "how's it going?" that kind of thing. You could feel sort of tension rising. I picked it up down in Silesia, which is the industrial heartland. As I said, in February of 1970 I sent a dispatch -- we use to send airgrams in those days -- that had this stuff in it. Then in the summer you got reports of housewives' riots in Silesia again, the place that's suppose to be the best-run place in Poland. You just talk to people and you are aware of that. I can say I'm proud of my little reporting and watching that build up. Now of course none of us expected the thing to blow.

The other thing that I was reporting was the Poles negotiating with the West Germans. That was something. Gomulka's payoff I think from the Soviets for loyalty to them during the Czechoslovakia invasions was a certain limited license to negotiate with the West Germans. That also began in 1969. You had the Bonn government in West Germany, the Grand Coalition, and the Poles were actually in the forefront of that. That was a change. You didn't expect that from someone as kind of loyal to the East Germans as Gomulka had been. It turned out that was part of the building up to give him the license to do that. In the end the Soviets insisted that they sign first. In other words, they insisted that the road to Warsaw and to Prague and to East Berlin lead through Moscow. They signed their bilateral agreement with the West Germans in August of 1970.

But the Poles' negotiations with the West Germans were going on through that whole period, and it interested me, and I also knew a West German who was very involved, a correspondent who was very close to the SPD, who spent a lot of time in Warsaw, Wolf-Dietrich or Wolf-Dieter Gross. I was learning a lot about what went on through him, he was fine guy. I said to myself, "You know, this can't be uncontroversial in Poland. It can't be a smooth thing, the fact that they are negotiating with the Germans; there has to be resistance to this." So when I would go down to Opole, in old Upper Silesia, what had been German before the war, I would also sniff around on that. You could tell people didn't like it. A lot of people down there considered it a sell-out. After all, they'd spent a lifetime trying to absorb those areas into Poland, what had once been Germany, where they were afraid of revisionism, of losing it all. They didn't see any reason to give stuff away or enough reasons to do it. That led to a wonderful sort of moment in a Foreign Service career. After one of these trips I put together an airgram. It was dated December 6, 1970. I put together the two little prongs that I had been following: one, the worker discontent, and second, the unhappiness, especially in Silesia, with the negotiation with the Germans.

Q: What was the negotiation? First place is with the West Germans?

SIMONS: With the West Germans and what it involved is their qualified recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier, which they had withheld throughout the whole postwar period.

Q: Why would there be dissatisfaction because that would be solidified?

SIMONS: Well, you had to make West Germany look like a normal place. It was a normalization of relations between Poland and West Germany, and there were a lot of Poles who continued to mistrust them. They thought they were having the wool pulled over their eyes. They thought it was a sham thing that the Germans were giving them. The West Germans did not give full juridical recognition of the line. What they said was "no changes of frontiers by force in Europe." So it was qualified, it was not quite the whole thing. So there were people in Poland who just hated Germans, especially down in that area. Anyway, on December 6 I sent that airgram, and I got Gene Boster to sign it. He was the authorizing officer. I signed the airgram over Stoessel's name. It went in, and what it said in conclusion was that Gierek, the Polish Tshombe, the boss of Silesia, has disqualified himself as a contender for power in Poland because of these two factors. And by the time that airgram reached Washington on December 22 or 23, Gierek was already First Secretary of Poland's ruling Party. So I was worried about it, worried that I made such a wrong prediction. So I went around in later years asking Poles about what this was. They said, "You know, you were right. One of the reasons that Gierek supported the expulsion of Gomulka was that he felt it was kind of his last chance, that he was losing traction in the Party." So after that I didn't feel so bad. But those were the kinds of political issues that we worked on.

Q: Well, when you talk about West Germany, how did East Germany fit into this equation? How did the Poles feel about East Germany?

SIMONS: Well, they felt it was necessary to them. It was the anchor of their compensation for losing their eastern territories and securing the western territories that they had gotten from Germany, and it was the East German regime that was the guarantee, because the Soviets had to continue to enforce those new frontiers in order to hold on to East Germany. That was the way it worked. In political terms -- and I didn't realize this until I left Poland and started studying these issues in the East European northern tier at Stanford -- the effect of it was permanent competition between the East Germans and the Poles as to who would be the Soviet Union's best friend in this part of Europe. The East Germans were bargaining from weakness -- "we're so weak you must support us" -- and the Poles had to find other reasons why the Soviet Union should like them. Part of the competition went on for years; all through the '60s and up until 1969 there was almost unqualified support from all the East Europeans to the East German regime, so that the Soviet Union would have no sense that the Poles were soft on that. The Poles had to compete for Soviet favor on other grounds. In the end, what happened was that Poland satisfied the Soviet Union that they were really a good ally. The fact that they had these liberalities did not undermine their basic loyalty. So at that point the Soviets let Gomulka negotiate with Bonn, which the East Germans hated. In order to conclude these treaties, they had to kick out Ulbricht. I don't know if you remember that, but it was his opposition to these treaties of his Eastern allies with West Germany that led to his expulsion and replacement by Honecker.

Q: When you say the Poles were competing to be the first best friends of the Soviets, I think that this was certainly at the Party level, it couldn't have been at the people's level.

SIMONS: No, no, the people's level I think about, well one of the reasons there was opposition to normalization with West Germany was that the only thing that attracted most Poles to the Soviet alliance was that new friendship securing the Oder-Neisse frontier. If that disappeared as an issue, if West Germany ceased to be a threat and a menace, then the fear was that the regime would lose support, and I think there was probably something to that. You know, if the regime could no longer wave the bloody shirt, as we called it after the U.S. Civil War, you couldn't know. If the regime could no longer do that about the Oder-Neisse line, then it was going to have to find other reasons why the people should like them.

Q: Tito after World War II waved that shirt for 30 years; I understand.

SIMONS: The Oder-Neisse line had the same kind of function in Polish politics.

Q: You mentioned on the labor movement, you kept talking about going down to Silesia. Silesia is what I think of as Silesia, but that's not where the revolt came from, is it?

SIMONS: No, no, that's Opole. That's the old Polish quarter of Silesia.

Q: The real sparks did evidently end up at the shipyards on the Baltic Coast, didn't they? When you were doing this was that considered a factor, or what were you looking at, factories, mines or what?

SIMONS: Yeah, mainly factories and mines. I mean shipbuilding is heavy industry, there was no doubt about it, but I was looking at more, especially because Silesia was the center of heavy industry, steel and coal, and actually copper too. We weren't looking at the Coast. In fact neither was the regime, because one of the reasons the riots broke out and spread so fast there was that all the riot suppression equipment was in Silesia. All the water hoses and stuff were down there, and it took time to get them back up to the other side. So it was unexpected.

Q: What was the evaluation, talking Political Section and the attaches and all, about the Polish Army? Where would it go, how much of a contribution to the Warsaw Pact was it, was it a repressive thing or were the Soviets worried about or what?

SIMONS: It was a large army. Poland has a great military tradition of which people are proud. In other words there was not some sort of disaffection in terms of service and stuff. But I don't think it was considered a trustworthy army. I think from the Soviet point of view, and I think also from our point of view, it was a big question mark. In other words I don't think the assumption was that it would cut and run and let the allies through; it was not as bad as the Czechs. I think the Czech army, especially after 1968, was just substantially written off in terms of military planning. With the Poles I don't think it was like that, but you just didn't know. I think the judgment was that the Soviets couldn't count on it and that we should not, and while we shouldn't write it off, we shouldn't expect it to be a strongpoint.

Q: I realize you were a junior officer there and all, but was there a concern that something in Poland could lead to enough of an uprising that might start World War III again? Berlin was always a problem, and I was wondering whether the Soviets at that point couldn't allow all the troops west of Poland, and those lines of supply to be threatened. Was that an issue?

SIMONS: No, it's a very - I won't say it's very strange, it's actually very natural - but it's an ambiguous situation from the '60s on. Actually I think from '56 on, from the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 on, and the negotiating with Poland notwithstanding, I think the basic assumption of the U.S. Government was that you could afford to encourage dissent and independence and liberalism in Eastern Europe because the Soviets would make sure that it wouldn't go too far. You know, the fooling around that we used to do was based on the assumption that the Soviets kind of had things under control, so that we could afford to kick up our heels a little bit and support our principles, act on our principles, feel good about ourselves, because it wasn't going to come to World War III. I think that that was what the basic situation was. Now Helmut Sonnenfeldt as Kissinger's Counselor in '75, I think got himself into trouble by saying something like this to an assembly of American ambassadors. The so-called "Sonnenfeldt Doctrine."

Q: I interviewed him and he just kept acting livid -- "That wasn't what I said" -- and I think he is right.

SIMONS: But I think the basic core of the thought was the one that I have just given you. I can recall how angry I was as a young officer in Warsaw reporting -- I got my first award from reporting on the revolution of 1970, the worker's revolt, and I spent a lot of time going around in my little car, around to Warsaw factories to see if there was anything to it I could learn, and in fact there was. I was excited. I mean for me people rising up for freedom was exciting. But then we heard a rumor from Washington that Sonnenfeldt's reaction to the workers' revolt was, "I hope they don't screw up détente." I understood the reaction, but of course I wasn't as invested in détente as he was. He was one of the architects of détente. For Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt, as you know, it was always a very parlous, fragile kind of thing. They felt they were not playing from strength, that they had a weak deck. They had put together this thing that they were pushing forward, and if the Poles screwed up it's almost a kind of breakdown: you know, the way the Germans felt in the '80s under Reagan. I mean the West Germans never much liked Solidarity in Poland because they were afraid it was going to screw up their relations with East Germany. So I think people ought to remember, they don't -- I think people now preen themselves on having always pursued their principles and having always been right – but you have to remember that in the Cold War there was a dark side to everything.

Q: Oh absolutely. You mentioned the revolution or the workers' revolt, we really haven't talked about that. What happened in 1970?

SIMONS: Well, what happened was that they signed the treaty with Germany on the 10th, something like that.

Q: 10th of what?

SIMONS: December. So four days after my "famous" airgram left the Embassy. I think they felt that with that problem out of the way they needed to pursue this economic reform I talked to you about. What they had come up with was the need to drastically cut subsidies for basic foodstuffs, especially for meat. The Poles during this period of '56 to '68 changed their eating habits a little bit, but they were insatiable for meat, they never had enough. That was the great telltale sign in the stores, as to whether there was any meat. Coffee was another one, but meat was the big mass consumption indicator. What they did was announce a wholesale price rise on the 12th of December, just before Christmas. In terms of the politics, awful timing: it showed arrogance and it showed a complacency about their own rightness. It's a little bit equal to the Bush Administration approach to Iraq. You can cut that one out. Anyway, there was a sense of arrogance there, in addition to taking money right out of peoples' pockets in the Christmas season, which is important for Poles. I was the first one I think in the Western diplomatic corps in Warsaw to hear that the workers were going out, because I was at a party and a woman told me, "I have a friend in Gdansk radio who has just called down and said that the workers are on the streets." So that was the trigger. We spent the next three weeks trying to figure out what was going on.

Q: When you say you spent the next three weeks, you were a Political Officer, what did you do?

SIMONS: You talked to whoever will talk to you, and there weren't many. Some were Polish journalists who would be in a position to know. You talked especially with Swedes, because they had a consulate in Szczecin and maybe Gdansk, anyway one up on the coast, and they had people in that consulate who were reporting. You tried to get hold of the newspapers up there, because the newspapers were kind of in the insurgent camp. You listened to Free Europe as much as you could. In my case you took off a couple of times a day in your little car and went around the factories, the major factories of Warsaw, like the Roza Luksemburg light-bulb factory, to see if you could see evidence of worker unhappiness. You sent the attaches out looking for Soviets, looking for military activity on the roads.

Q: On the roads?

SIMONS: Yeah, that would be on the assumption that they were worried about positioning troops, or something like that. You just did as much as you could. But it was all little bits and pieces, because you had no access to decision-making.

Q: If there's a workers' revolt you look at the factories, but at a certain point if things are going far you're going to have a huge mob of people waving their arms in the main square of Warsaw. Did that happen?

SIMONS: No, no the crisis on the Coast got very bad, and you had crises, also strikes, also in other factories down country. They spread it to the point where the Party itself came together. Gomulka made an appeal to the Soviets of some kind and he was turned down. That was not public. That didn't come out until later. Then the Party got together and decided that Gomulka has to go. They had a replacement, Gierek, so this was done within the Party. The whole thing took five days. But meanwhile people had been shot. There was a mass shooting up in Gdynia. People said there were scores of dead, and it turned out later there were hundreds up there.

Q: Who did the shooting, the police or the military?

SIMONS: Hard to tell. I didn't think the military fired. I think Jaruzelski would have preened himself on not letting the military fire. He was Minister of Defence, I think, and wouldn't let the military fire at that point. So that's where it was. It did not get to Warsaw. You were having meetings in Warsaw factories. You had the two shipyards that went out. Then after that you had Szczecin, the shipyard, because it is on the Coast. You had what amounted to a workers' commune, and one that did not kind of disband. I think they managed to disband in Gdansk, but that thing stayed up there in Szczecin like a sore. They had a defence perimeter and supplies and arms. The first thing Gierek did was to go up there, not one of the first things in the first weeks, but the first thing, was to go out there and make a dramatic pilgrimage to the Szczecin shipyard, where he spent the night talking to the workers, and that was going to be his famous "Trust me, have confidence in me." They said, "We trust you." That's how you got over the crisis.

Then the trouble was that then they wouldn't rescind the old price rise. In other words they had changed the First Secretary, they had a political crisis of the first order, but they were still determined to maintain the new high prices, and that went on until February. The women textile workers in Lodz had struck. There were textile workers in other places who also went out, and the new Premier Jaroszewicz sort of went on national television with tears in his eyes and announced the end of the crisis. But it took another strike, this time by women, to do that. The great Polish novelist Konwicki later wrote that he knew the end was coming when he saw Jaroszewicz crying on television. This was not the old Communist Poland.

Q: During the period you were there, what was the role of the Church? How did we see it and deal with it?

SIMONS: Well, we dealt with it not much. It was an important role. The Church was the preserver and symbol, for most Poles, of Polish nationality. That was something that they had managed to build in the 19th Century, during the partitions. When Poland had no state they managed to preserve Polishness, and after the Polish state was restored in 1918 the Church bulked very large. It had been seriously repressed in the Stalin period from '44 to '56, but it had managed to maintain its integrity. The Cardinal, Cardinal Wyszynski, was under house arrest during that period. The regime set up an organization of "patriotic

priests.“ They set up this PAX organization, sort of Catholic nationalists, all trying to split the Church. None of it quite worked. Then in 1956…

Q: The government essentially started PAX...

SIMONS: Yeah, collaboration as Catholics. Not completely slaves, but still supporting socialism and all of that. Its leader Piasecki was never put in prison like Home Army people. Of course he was a smarter guy. Wyszynski as a young man had had a reputation as being kind of a workers' priest. Anyway, he was let out in '56, and they reached kind of a new accommodation where the Church would be allowed to get a lot of its property back and preach freely. They had a crisis in 1966 when the Polish Episcopate wrote this letter asking the German Episcopate for forgiveness. Amazing kind of thing. Then it was pilloried by the regime, so you had competing celebrations of the thousandth anniversary of Christianity in Poland in 1966. There was a lot of bad blood between Church and State, but still the Church was an important force. We didn't have much to do with it because we kind of didn't want it to associate with us. We are a secular state. It's something that we respect, but it's not something that we're called upon really to deal with very much. I think that is probably what I'd say about that. We followed it. We followed these issues. We tried to get to know people who knew things in the Church. Some of those included PAX people. Also some of the other people in these slightly suspect Catholic organizations. It was all part of this complex Polish picture.

Q: How about Polish-American communities, Congressmen and all, did that play?

SIMONS: Well, the way we were doing it pleased some. It pleased some especially on visas, because we heard from Polish-American Congressmen mainly in connection with visa requests. The Polish-American community does not swing the weight that the Jewish community does or the Italian community or even the Greek community, although it is larger by a couple of times in terms of people who claim Polish descent. I think there are complex reasons for that. Also it is quite divided among itself in terms of attitudes toward Poland. Poland was a Communist country, so they were unlike the Greeks, unlike the Jews, unlike the Italians: the country that they would have been loyal to and lobbyists for was a Communist country that most of them hated. So what you got was that they were interested in personal contacts. When Solidarity came (after 1979) they flooded Poland with packages back to their relatives.

Q: When was Solidarity founded?

SIMONS: In 1979, and then it became great in the '80s. So yeah, Polish-Americans are very generous, but all on a personal basis. There was not much of a coherent political kind of lobby. No coherent line, no coherent political objectives.

Q: Well, then you left there in…?

SIMONS: I left there in June of 1971 after three years. My political acumen had reached the point of deadlock. I learned later what happened. I knew a correspondent for *Trybuna*

Ludu, the Party paper, who had been in Moscow. I used to get anti-Soviet jokes from him because he was a good Polish patriot, and living in Moscow rubbed most Poles the wrong way. But anyway he was a friend, and at a certain point in April or May of 1971 we were at a party, some diplomatic party, and he said, "What do you think is going on?" I said with great confidence, "Well, I think Gierek has consolidated his power and is taking care of business in the Party." He said, "What do you think happened in Olsztyn?" I said, "Well, you know Moczar paid a visit to Olsztyn, and I just saw the thing in the paper, but I don't think it is significant." It turned out later after I left, years later, that I found out that what had happened in Olsztyn, and what he was trying to hint to me about, that I should pursue and follow it, was that this nationalist Party man had tried kind of a last-gasp coup in Olsztyn that Gierek then suppressed. But I was so full of my knowledge and stuff that I just kind of brushed him off. So anyway I knew enough for somebody to want to tell me something like that, but not enough to understand what he as saying; so it was probably time to go.

STUDYING EASTERN EUROPE IN CALIFORNIA (1971-1972), CHINA TALKS IN WARSAW (1969-70)

We went at that point because I had applied for, I forget who suggested it, but I had applied for and gotten a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship in the second year of the program. This was a fellowship that was really inspired by David Rockefeller because he was afraid that America was turning away from foreign affairs because of the Vietnam War, which was still on. He had set up this thing for people under 35: academics would go into Government and Government people would go into academia, and you would try a cross-fertilization. It's been one of the most amazing and enriching programs I think that the country has had since then. I got one. Dick Solomon, for instance if you know him, the outgoing President of the Institute for Peace, got one. He went into Government from academia in my class. Anyway, I had a choice of where to go and what to do. I put in a proposal to study the economic basis for an East European northern tier. In other words if there was anything that East Germany and Poland and Czechoslovakia had in common economically, that might make them sort of a sub-bloc within the Bloc. And that's how I learned my East European economics. I'd done basic training in economics with the Kennedy Round. Anyway, I had a choice of where to go and we decided to go to California, since we'd never been there and probably would never get another chance to go there. But for research like that I needed an East European library, so I chose the Hoover Institution at Stanford, which was the one that they had out there.

Q: Well, it's one of the pre-eminent ones, isn't it?

SIMONS: Yeah, and I spent a glorious year at Hoover. But what I discovered was that the best professorial expertise was at Berkeley (the University of California at Berkeley), so I spent a lot of time commuting over to Berkeley.

Q: Well did you find…for example the Hoover Institution -- you were there from '71 to '72 -

SIMONS: Right.

Q: You know the Hoover Institution is representative of a fairly conservative sort of Republican institution, whereas Berkeley was I guess more free-flowing.

SIMONS: Well, it is even more complicated than that, because the Hoover Institution is inserted like an enclave, like an island, in the liberal sea of Stanford.

Q: Herbert Hoover's last directions.

SIMONS: Yeah. It's a great institution, but it *is* conservative. It was very anti-Communist. It had these wonderful collections, but Stanford would not let them teach, the people there couldn't teach, so they were kind of research scholars without students.

Q: Stanford University.

SIMONS: Stanford University. They've worked out stuff since then, but there is always the kind of distinction where Hoover's people are a little bit second-class. Already they were getting, how shall I say, labelled. In other words I was part of a group. I functioned as a "national scholar " or something. There were a bunch of us, all doing international topics or national topics, taxation or some things like that. But the international topics were the people I knew. I kept looking for what is right-wing about them, because some of them were perfect, I mean they were perfectly sensible and interesting, with potentially useful topics, but you had to work to kind of find the ideological Ethiopian in the fuel supply, but there always was one. In other words if you studied Chinese and Malay relations, relations between Chinese and Malays in Malaysia, you discovered that the point was that different ethnic groups can't live together peacefully or something. There was always something.

Q: In other words ideology tended to intrude on conclusions?

SIMONS: Well, I think, no, it didn't intrude on conclusions, but it helped determine the projects that they accepted. I mean once you were accepted they didn't try to change you, but there was always something back there. So anyway that was interesting. Hoover now, I was back at Stanford from '98 to 2001, Hoover was now under John Raisian, who succeeded Glenn Campbell who really was the ideological person. The way they have gotten away from the old being tarred with the old right-wing reputation, I think, is by going mainly into domestic policy; they've gone further and further away from the international side, more and more toward the domestic where it is okay to be, I mean it's more kosher, I mean it's less controversial.

Q: Well also, the demise of Marxism must also have taken away the drive, because that whole thing was, I don't know, was it anti-Marxist or what? Wasn't Kerensky there?

SIMONS: No, Kerensky was at the Washington University of St. Louis, but Bertram Wolfe was there at Hoover.

Q: Yeah, but I mean the whole thing was sort of anti-Communist. Where did the money come from for the Hoover Institution?

SIMONS: From Hoover. But you know Hoover was a great humanitarian. He saved Russia from famine.

Q: Oh, absolutely.

SIMONS: You know, that was in 1921, so it was a pre-Cold War America, it was kind of a different America. I think now Hoover is funded by conservative businessmen mainly. But you had, you have rich, rich archives including a whole range; the Social Democratic archives are there. Now they are buying up memoirs of Communists. It is going to continue to be a dynamite research library for the late-Communist period, because they are purchasing the memoirs and papers of Communist politicians and civil servants now in their retirement. It's great.

Q: What did you come up with from your studies?

SIMONS: Well, I never published them because it would have been impossible after leaving Hoover to update the data, the economic data. What I came up with was that there was in fact no economic basis for a political sub-group of East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, because they were naturally competitive rather than complementary in terms of their economies. Why would they trade with each other? But what I mainly came up with was a perception which has governed my thinking ever since. That is the basis of my own book on Eastern Europe. What it sees is the natural tendency with Stalinist industrialization in a region that does not produce its own industrial raw materials and builds an industry that produces second-rate goods because it doesn't absorb technology or provide incentives for quality and maintenance control. The natural tendency is that the more industrialized you are the more dependent you are on the Soviet market. This kicks in – the effect that I call the iron ring in my book – it kicks in sequentially depending on the degree of industrialization.

In other words it happened first in Czechoslovakia. East Germany was always dependent but for political reasons. It started happening in Poland and Hungary in the '60s. Then it happened last in Romania and Bulgaria because they came from the furthest back, 80% peasant and agricultural to start with. In fact the benefits of Stalinist industrialization had not all worn out in Romania and Bulgaria by the end of the regime. So that's what I learned, and also that to break out of this iron ring took either politics, generally politics, or a special kind of economics. In other words you had to have good relations with the West or with Third World markets. In other words, Ceausescu developed a relationship with the Shah of Iran. One of the reasons that Romania was in such trouble in the 1980s was that they had lost the relationship with the Shah, because before then Iranians would

still take crummy Romanian machinery in return for oil. But the only big market that would keep taking the shoddy East European industrial goods in return for oil and coal was the Soviet market, unless you could get out. The Poles did. They could sell hams. They had some sales in the West. Romanians had some sales in the West and in the Third World. A country like Czechoslovakia was trapped. Bulgaria and Romania, well Romania I described, they had oil to start with that could be sold. When they started losing oil, they started to pick up people like the Shah of Iran. Bulgaria was always trapped, because they have fruits and vegetables, but you can't run West on that. They didn't have resources to trade with. They didn't have raw materials that the West wanted. Nobody in the West in their right minds would want East European manufactures. I learned that during that year at Hoover.

Q: Well, one of the things anybody who looks at economic situations learns, what was produced and all we were still seeing the Soviet Union as being this colossus, yet everybody looked at it in bits and pieces. We're talking about how poorly the thing was running, and when we -- at least my impression is -- that probably what brought the Soviet Union down more than anything else was that the economic system didn't work.

SIMONS: Well, I think it was a combination. Again, some of it is in my book. I think it started off with more than that. In other words I think the system in Eastern Europe started off with more than that. It started off with a certain degree of idealism. Capitalism looked like it had failed. The Depression had brought Fascism. This was kind of a new role of justice that they were fighting for, and of sacrifice. They knew they were sacrificing. So I think that element was there at the beginning. Capitalism in 1945 looked like a failure except in the United States, but in Europe it took 20 years to rehab capitalism as an ideology on the European continent. So that was one element.

I think the other element was at the beginning Stalinism was an engine of upward social mobility. This transferred the whole natural surplus of the Polish countryside into the cities. Just living in the city was an advance in life's standards for the people who enjoyed it, and also they were given access through the Communist system to power. I mean through the educational system that favored workers and peasants, that gave them a leg up. It was affirmative action for workers and peasants. The old class enemies and their children were kind of excluded in those years. So it really was a way for people with families who had never been anything in society to come to power and advance and enjoy modest prosperity. That lasted for 20 years. Then you lost it. I mean the fact that Communism lost its ideological appeal by 1968. What that meant was that all that was left to compete with was economic performance, and you could no longer use terror after Stalin. You could no longer use mass terror, which was the Stalinist way. Gulag, I mean the camps. That was no longer an option for them. And the frontiers were opening.

Q: This is tape 3, side 1 with Tom Simons.

SIMONS: By the '70s and '80s Communism was left with only economics to compete with. In other words it had to deliver welfare because it didn't have anything else. The

educational system that had been the engine of the vehicle, the motor of upward social mobility, was clogging up in all of these countries.

Q: What had happened? Why then?

SIMONS: Well, I think first of all they had reached a plateau in industrialization. You can't keep industrializing that way forever, so there was no more demand. They were growing but slowly, I mean growth was slowing. Capital-output ratios started to skyrocket because they can't absorb technology. There is no incentive in that system to bring in new technology, and you had a new industrial intelligentsia, a new technological intelligentsia, that monopolized access to the educational system for its children. So what happened was that the new working class had been brought into the city from the countryside was now blocked in the working class. The absence of prospects was one of the things that fed worker discontent. Meanwhile a lot of the intelligentsia had also supported the regimes at the beginning. First it was because it gave them access to power, it's after all an ideological regime, and their trade is ideas. Second, intellectuals generally like the idea of the state running things as long as they are in on it. That was consolidated. But that was also turning to ice, so they were unhappy. So a lot of the humanistic intelligentsia that was being overwhelmed by the new technological intelligentsia re-discovered their national vocation. In other words they went back to becoming spokesmen, not for triumphant socialism but for the lost values of the country's glorious national past.

Q: Well, when you were looking at the economics of this distinct region, were you seeing this as a sort of second-rate organization? I mean was this a weakness? If this was the modern engine that was helping the Soviet Union, it must have spoken volumes for what's happening in the Soviet Union at the time.

SIMONS: Oh, okay: that connection. I mean what was clear was that there were tremendous gains in the first two decades: tremendous gains in productivity and in production and also in welfare, in schools and health. Those systems worked and people's lives were better by 1965 by a lot than they had been in 1945. Then stagnation set in. The stagnation was structural. In other words it was not something easily resolved, because every method to resolve it brought its own trauma and was sort of abandoned back then. You had to think that the same things were happening in the Soviet Union. The difficulty in analysis was that the Soviet Union's a gigantic economy and also a highly militarized economy. What you had in the Soviet Union to a degree that you had nowhere else in Eastern Europe was kind of a dual economy. In other words most of the civilian economy was where Romania and Bulgaria were where you were still getting great advances to scale, in other words capital-output ratios were still falling. You could still get big payoffs. It was going up, but the productivity was topping off and there were not many good ways to go.

The military economy was a world of its own. People in it were living under full socialism, and you had to assume and you were told that this was extremely efficient. The missiles were there and the tanks were there and you could see what they were doing.

They were impressive. Their reserves of things were coming on line. So it was a quandary as to how to analyze this. Then of course they themselves said everything is great and they're producing the statistics. So I think most of us who -- we can talk about it the next time when we get to the Soviet Union -- but I think most of us thought they were nowhere near as efficient as they claimed to be, but on the other hand none of us could believe that the size of the Soviet economy was only a third of ours, which is what it turned out to be. We thought it was sort of bigger and more efficient.

Q: Well is there anything else we should talk about, do you think?

SIMONS: In Poland, I was also the scribe at the last of the China talks, the special talks between the Peoples' Republic and the United States. The only place where the Americans and Chinese were talking between 1958 and 1969 was in Warsaw. 190 rounds of these talks, I think. They had a set format. You would send in a Political Advisor and an interpreter to join the Chief of Mission of the local Warsaw mission and a Scribe whose job was to take down everything without a tape recorder, and I was that Scribe from 1969 to 1971; I was also the liaison with my counterpart in the Chinese Embassy. So in that capacity I experienced the whole coming of the opening to China. It was very exciting.

Q: Who was doing the talks on our side at that time?

SIMONS: Walter Stoessel was the Ambassador. Paul Kreisberg was the Political Advisor, who has since died. Don Anderson, who ended up as Consul General in Shanghai, was the interpreter. And myself as Scribe. On the Chinese side it was Lei Yang, who was Chargé d'affaires, and two people from Beijing and my counterpart in Warsaw, and their names I don't remember. I think that one of them became Ambassador to Poland. We started off with Polish as the language of communication. That was the first meeting of an American diplomat in a PRC mission since the Revolution, and it took place in Warsaw in 1970. We went to the Chinese Embassy, and there we sat the four of us in a row, each side. The interpretation went Chinese to Polish to English and back. This is before the meetings with advisors from capitals, it was just the two us, not four us, just the two of us, just Stoessel and myself. I was the interpreter with my Chinese counterpart. When they later sent the people from the capitals, they discovered that there had been some pretty strange messages passed through the Polish language.

Q: What was going on? I mean what was happening?

SIMONS: What was going on, I think in retrospect, and it was unclear to me at the time, and clearer in Washington at the time than it was to us, was that Russia and China had almost gone to war. The Soviet Union and China had almost gone to war in 1969. It was serious.

Q: There were clashes on the Ussuri River.

SIMONS: The Ussuri River, that's right. One thing we did notice that fall was that Soviets spread out around Warsaw kind of slandering the Chinese and trying to gain sympathy for their point of view. Then you had the Victor Louis article predicting war between the Soviets and China.

Q: He was the sort of the Moscow "speaker"

SIMONS: Yeah, it was published in England. I knew him when I served in Moscow years later. But anyway, there was that, and then Nixon -- already in the summer, I forget the chronology but I think maybe even before the Ussuri incident -- had instructed Stoessel to get in touch with the Chinese and tell them that he wanted improved relations. Then came the whole famous sequence of trying to find a venue where we were both at, because we didn't recognize each other. Then trying to find out who were Chinese – they all wore the same Mao outfits in those days -- so Stoessel wouldn't give his message to the Mongolians or the Vietnamese. Then ending up with the Yugoslav fashion show on the 3rd of December and chasing the Chinese down the steps as they went back to their Embassy, me collaring what we thought was an attaché but turned out to be an intern or interpreter. Stoessel saying to him, "My president wants me to tell you he wants to improve relations." Zhou Enlai later told Kissinger that the young man almost had a heart attack. It was grand.

Then we finally met, the four of us from the embassies, that must have been '69, the end of '69. Then the meetings with advisors from capitals took place and I was in the room. They were the most instructed meetings I think in the history of modern diplomacy: not a word was said that was not instructed by capitals. In other words there was no spontaneity at all, and I had to take down every word, and report by the next pouch. You can see how communications have advanced now. But anyway there was a summary of mine in cable form. In sequence, first the Chinese spokesman and then the American spokesman suggested a high-level meeting in either capital. It was spontaneous on both sides. It had not been cooked beforehand. I could feel the earth move. That was such a turning point in the Cold War. We knew it was significant. We weren't sure why it was happening, but we could feel that we were participating in history. Stoessel when he died, not long before he died, was asked what was the most important, significant thing in his career, and he said the China talks in Warsaw.

Q: Well, then you left there in '71?

SIMONS: In '71, that's right. I heard when I arrived in the United States about Kissinger's secret trip to China, which I think took place in July. I had just left Warsaw. Once the talks there stopped over Cambodia, the communications switched to other places, so I was unaware of the sequel to these statements in the last period.

Q: This is the beginning of...?

SIMONS: That was the beginning.

WASHINGTON 1972-1975
(MBFR AND POLICY PLANNING)

Q: Just to put at the end of the tape so we know where to pick it up, what did you do?

SIMONS: I went into the Department like a wise young officer should. I went to the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, into its Office of Disarmament and Communist Affairs, DCA, which had been one of the main action offices for negotiating the SALT agreement that had just been completed. The whole leadership of the Bureau was then sacrificed to Senator Henry Jackson in return for the Senate's vote to ratify this SALT agreement. We'll talk about that next time.

Q: This was in July 1972. Tom, you want to talk about the atmosphere in this place. You know the pressures on it and what was happening when you were there?

SIMONS: Well, it was a wonderful bureau to come into because it had won its stripes with the SALT agreement that had been signed in Moscow that May, May of 1972. I came in in the summer from California. I went into an office where the boss, Jack Shaw, had been almost a Secretary of Delegation to the SALT delegation. The Deputy Assistant Secretaries were Ray Garthoff who had also been in the SALT negotiations, and Tom Pickering. Ron Spiers was the equivalent of an Assistant Secretary -- I think at that time he was not yet assistant secretary, he was just Director of PM -- but he had been one of the movers and shakers getting our positions together through the whole Kissinger apparatus, mind you.

Q: This was when?

SIMONS: This was summer 1972. Nixon had just been to Moscow and signed the ABM Treaty and the SALT I Interim Agreement, which was the first agreement to limit numbers of strategic weapons. It limited the numbers, it sort of fixed the numbers of launchers, strategic missile launchers in place, so it was not quite a reduction agreement. The numbers in place gave the Soviets an advantage. I didn't come in to work on strategic arms; my job was conventional arms in Europe, which later became MBFR, "Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions" in Europe, which was something that we wanted in order to short-circuit the Mansfield Amendment pressuring Congress to bring U.S. troops home from Europe unilaterally because the Europeans weren't being supportive enough on the Vietnam War. The Soviets were pressing for a European Security Conference. This was something that they had revived, that the Warsaw Pact had revived, at a meeting in Budapest in the spring of 1969 and that they had been pursuing since then. The effort there was get a multi-lateral ratification of the postwar status quo. We didn't much like that because it looked like a sort of give-away.

Q: Sort of another Yalta.

SIMONS: That was the fear. But in the aftermath of Czechoslovakia and SALT they were both active. The makings of a trade-off were not yet there. They emerged during the

course of 1972 when I was working on it in that Bureau. Of course the main action was strategic arms, and what had happened on strategic arms was that conservatives in the Senate, and I would count on these issues that Senator Henry Jackson was a conservative, very anti-Communist, very anti-Soviet, I should say, because he was a great friend of Ceausescu as I discovered when I served in Romania. Ceausescu had broken with the Soviets in a certain number of areas. But anyway they flashed onto the fact that the Interim Agreement ratified a substantial imbalance in the numbers of launchers that were allowed to the two sides, because the Soviets had more to start with. So in negotiating with the Administration for Senate advice and consent to the agreement, they imposed two conditions. One was that any future agreement would provide for equal numbers of launchers. In other words the Soviets would have to reduce more than we did, and that indeed is what happened in 1979, in SALT II that the Carter administration completed in 1979, I think it was signed at Vienna in 1979. But the second condition was that you purge the people who had negotiated the agreement.

Q: Well just trying to get the atmospherics of the place when you got in there: I mean was Jackson seen as somebody who was not the enemy, and where did the Pentagon sort of fit in there?

SIMONS: Well, the Pentagon liked the agreement, was supportive of the agreement, because the Pentagon, the uniformed military, likes stability, and this was an agreement that stabilized the strategic situation and allowed you to plan and to proceed in an orderly and more predictable fashion. The military support for the agreement was pretty good. Military support for arms control was pretty good. I mean there were exceptions, there were crosscurrents, but in the Pentagon…for instance, the Air Force is very attached to manned bombers, so they didn't like limits on manned bombers, which were excepted from these treaties, and the Soviets felt that that was an advantage for our side, because we had so many more of them than they did. Anyway you got crosscurrents of that sort, but overall the military was supportive. I think opposition was mainly sort of political and anti-Communist. It was people who were afraid that this détente policy was weakening our resolve and our capacity to stand up to the Soviet threat and the Soviet challenge. Jackson was considered an enemy.

Q: Were there agents of the anti-Communist right, I mean political types, inserted into your area from congress or elsewhere?

SIMONS: When the Political-Military Affairs Bureau was purged, Ron Spiers went off as Ambassador to the Bahamas. Ray Garthoff went off to be a Foreign Service Inspector, I think. I mean the Carter administration later gave him a job as Ambassador to Bulgaria. Jack Shaw had a liver ailment and was sort of taken out of the picture. Ron was replaced by a man named Seymour Weiss and Ray by a Deputy Assistant Secretary -- well not "secretary" because of the Bureau situation, but a Deputy Director -- named Leon Sloss. They were of a more conservative persuasion and were close to the two committees on the Hill that did these things. They weren't quite agents of Jackson, but they were pronouncedly more conservative and skeptical of arms control and of the Soviets.

Q: While you were there, the Jackson committee was it Armed Forces?

SIMONS: I think it was Armed Services.

Q: The Armed Services Committee, well anyway, when Jackson reigned this is very much a presence and something you thought about all the time. You were careful.

SIMONS: Well, yeah. It wasn't as overt or as pervasive as your question suggests, but they were a presence that was out there, that you kept in mind. Mainly, however, you did your job. It was clear that you were going to go into a SALT II negotiation and that it was going to be difficult. You accepted the Senate proviso as a condition of the next advice and consent, that the next time would be equal, so you tried to negotiate on that basis.

Q: Well, your particular part of the action though was not SALT II?

SIMONS: My particular part of the action was in the course of that year, post-SALT I, and it involved Europe. Because one of the things that happened was that the Europeans felt that they had been kind of not consulted enough in the run-up to the signature of SALT I, and also at Moscow we signed onto a Declaration of Principles governing relations between the two states, that was mainly something the Soviets wanted, which the Administration kind of gave them and didn't take very seriously, and it really looked like a kind of bilateral deal to our Allies. We didn't take it seriously, but it could be made to sound like a condominium agreement to run the world. This caused a good deal of bad blood and suspicion among the European Allies. So in order to kind of help with that, we started to move toward agreeing to convening a European Security Conference. The beginning of the negotiation that led in 1975 to the Helsinki Final Act was in that September of 1972. But in return for that, we insisted on the beginning of MBFR negotiations, Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations, which accordingly started up in Vienna in January of 1973.

Then it was a question of getting those negotiations going and getting the U.S. positions for it. In January of 1973 most of the people who thought that MBFR was going to be a big thing took off for Vienna to be members of our Delegation. I remember Reginald Bartholomew, who was still in the Pentagon at that time, went off to Vienna to be in on the action. There came back from Bonn an extraordinary man, Jonathan Dean, Jock Dean, who had been Political Counselor in our Embassy there and one of the movers and shakers in a major Berlin agreement that was also signed and was part of this emerging East-West package. We insisted that the Soviets really stabilize the Berlin situation for good, and they did. Dean was a major negotiator on that. He came back and he sort of took over the MBFR operation, and with everybody who had done the work previously now in Vienna, somebody still had to do the U.S. positions. So Dean put together the inter-agency operation that he ran and I became his principal drafter for MBFR. I can remember coming in early one morning, 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, and drafting the MBFR position speech. Our Ambassador to NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) was Donald Rumsfeld, a young coming man, a former Congressman. I was writing the speech that he would present that same day or the next day to the NAC, the

North Atlantic Council, on what our position would be on MBFR. So I did that, and that really kind of established me -- you know I was on all the cables with all the positions and I kind of established my name around the Department as the action officer on MBFR. At the same time it seemed to me that these negotiations were starting on both SALT II and MBFR and they seemed unlikely to achieve resolution any time soon.

Meanwhile, it was after the election of 1972, the Nixon sweep of McGovern, and yet the Watergate sore continued to bleed. It was a question in the White House of whether Henry Kissinger should become Secretary of State. In other words whether he should move from the White House as National Security Advisor to establish some kind of firmer institutional base, what with the President perhaps headed for trouble. Winston Lord and I had known each since the Kennedy Round delegation in Geneva. Actually we switched jobs. During my year as special assistant to Blumenthal as resident ambassador, Winston Lord was the Technical Secretary for the team negotiating with the European Economic Community. We switched jobs the last year. In other words he became Blumenthal's special assistant, and I became the Technical Secretary for negotiating with the EEC and learned a lot more in trade economics. Anyway, in 1973 there I'd been in PM for the better part of a year doing this job, and it seemed to me that the negotiations were on track and were not going to go anywhere soon. Kissinger decided -- I mean I told Winston when he asked that my advice would be that Kissinger should come and should consolidate his space – to become Secretary of State. So Winston came over with him and became the Director of Policy Planning, Kissinger's policy planning director, and over the course of the fall he asked me to join him, so I joined him in early 1974 in policy planning. I transferred out of PM.

Q: Let's go back a bit. What were we pushing in your particular area with NATO to bring about?

SIMONS: We wanted to get into negotiations, and in NATO I don't think we were pushing much.

Q: It wasn't NATO then but it was...

SIMONS: …it was the European allies. We wanted to get joint positions for MBFR, for negotiations with the East, but also positions that would serve us to kind of lock negotiations into place for a long, long time. In other words we really weren't looking for quick results and didn't feel under pressure to bring those negotiations to a conclusion. In fact before they came to a conclusion ever, they were transformed into something else, into the "conventional forces in Europe agreement," CFA, that came later, this is the late '80s, it's Gorbachev. So there were negotiations that went on for years and that was the intention.

Q: Why weren't we looking for a quick fix?

SIMONS: Because we didn't much want to reduce troops in Europe, and so what we did was insist on very, very asymmetrical reductions from the Soviets, which the Soviets

were very, very unlikely to assent to, and we simply wanted that situation to go on. I realized that at the time. I mean nobody would actually say that. I mean everybody was committed to the success of the negotiations, but you didn't feel much of an umph.

Q: Well what about the European Allies, I mean you know they weren't anywhere close, were they close to fulfilling their military commitments?

SIMONS: No, I mean that was the whole burden-sharing argument that was sort of part of it. They kind of liked them to be a part too because it kept us in Europe. Remember this was the period that was still the Vietnam War, and their concern was that we would sort of leave Europe adrift, and so they kind of liked the negotiation. But again they didn't much like the negotiation that would bring a lot of American reductions, so the burden-sharing thing was out there. It was part of the pressure from the American body politic on the Administration to punish the Europeans or to get things better in Europe because we were being unsupported, they were being bad allies. But I think on the part of the Administration it was very much a holding operation on the one hand and sort of a sop to the Europeans on the other, as we proceeded with the bilateral negotiations with the Soviets on strategic arms. So anyway I went to Policy Planning, sorry.

Q: Won't let you go. What was our perception at that time, that you were getting from your colleagues, as you were looking at this, of the "Soviet threat"? Let's say in Europe.

SIMONS: Yeah, we considered the Soviet Union as kind of a status quo power, basically. I mean CSCE, the objective of CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) for the Soviets was to get Western ratification of the postwar status quo. The Soviets, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, had built themselves up to strategic parity or better. To strategic parity with us, which was the basis for the SALT negotiations: to try and stabilize that while allowing both sides to modernize and increase weaponry that was not covered, constrained by this treaty system. On the conventional side we didn't think there was a major build-up underway. So the Soviets did not look to us like an adventurous power, lunging for superiority. But of course there were major elements in the American body politic who suspected them of just that, and thought that we were allowing the wool to be pulled over our eyes. That we were blinking at Soviet hegemonic aspirations, superiority aspirations. That was sort of the shape of the argument.

I can remember one time in the summer of 1974, Averell Harriman called…I think Sonnenfeldt, who then called Winston, because he had read in The New York Times that the Soviets were building up their conventional forces in Europe even though they were negotiating on MBFR, and he wanted someone to brief him. Winston sent me over to brief him. I went to his Georgetown house, with the Churchill pictures on the walls. There he was in his bathrobe and slippers. He was a wonderful man, and his new wife Pamela was sort of moving around in the background. I gave him a briefing on what we knew of Soviet conventional forces, and it didn't look as if there were major build-ups. I mean there were rotations and there were kind of improvements in weapons quality, but not a major build-up.

But then we got into the question of détente. Harriman had a trick of asking younger people for their opinions, which of course flattered them immensely, and he did it here. I knew him for most of the rest of his life, and he kept doing it. He asked me what I thought and I said, "Well, I was struck by the fact that the three elements of the old New Deal coalition in the Democratic Party who had supported improved or stabilized relations with the Soviet Union were turning against them now; the labor unions, the Jewish constituency and the major part of the intelligentsia." He thought about that and he said, "That's very interesting. You know I've been planning after the Congressional elections this fall to kind of beat the drums for more support among Democrats for détente." "But," he said, "it's really that bad, and Jackson's tied it up with the Jews too?" You know, you're not used to using the word among Americans. I use it a lot in these interviews but in a Polish context, because it is "Jews" in Polish without any alarming or shocking affect. But anyway I said, "Could we get someone to call you and talk about this?" I think Hal Sonnenfeldt was later in touch with him. But it was very, very late. Henry Jackson did have an anti-détente constituency within the Democratic Party, and it was very strong. That was sort of my first brush with high politics and the way they are played.

Q: You have permission to go.

SIMONS: Go to Policy Planning.

Q: You were in Policy Planning from when to when?

SIMONS: I was in Policy Planning from January 1974 to January of 1975, one year.

Q: You know policy planning is sort of a very amorphous thing. Sometimes it's a speech-writing outfit, sometimes -- I mean I'm not sure how much since George Kennan's time, how much is policy planning. Can you explain what policy planning was when you were there?

SIMONS: Yeah, policy planning -- and it's been true since and I imagine it was true before -- depends very much on the personal relationship between the Director and the Secretary of State. If the Secretary of State wants to use policy planning or the Director for Policy Planning, he can get some good work out of policy planning. If he doesn't care, if there is no push like that or cachet, policy planning will exhaust itself trying to horn in on the work of the ordinary bureaus. My position was not great because I was doing Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, all of which was being done by Helmut Sonnenfeldt as Counselor of the Department without asking me. So I was kind of in on the fringes of stuff and writing stuff for the Secretary on the Balkans. I remember Kissinger sent one paper back with "brilliant" on it. I said the Balkans are part of a Balkanized Europe East and West. I did an analysis of the difference between developed Europe and the less developed Europe across the East- West divide, in other words a kind of Mediterranean thing on the one hand and a North European thing on the other. Anyway that was the hobby-horse without much effect, which is one reason I left. But the rest of Policy Planning, with Winston Lord there as a person very close to Kissinger, with

a good, special personal relationship with Kissinger, he had a license to grab hold of and run with emerging issues which nobody else in the bureaucracy was doing. So in my year in Policy Planning, the Winston Lord Policy Planning staff actually invented three issues for U.S. foreign policy. In other words it invented them and forced them on the apparatus. One was world food policy, because it was the time when everybody was predicting a world food crisis; it never happened, but we took it on as something the U.S. Government as such ought to worry about. Another was human rights. Human rights was emerging as something to care about, and also we ended up putting it into CSCE in Basket Three as a pre-condition for completing the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.

Q: Congress was getting involved.

SIMONS: Congress was getting involved, and there were NGOs (non-governmental organizations) involved. You had the Jewish interest in Soviet Jewry. I mean it was an emerging public concern, and we had an open government. It was, God what was his name, Abe something, was my colleague in Policy Planning who sort of became the focal point for putting human rights on the agenda. And the third was nuclear non-proliferation. We had Jerry Kahan who later went to Ankara, but who was then an active scholar on this Policy Planning staff starting to beat the drums. You had the Non-Proliferation Treaty in force since 1969, but you had the problem of leaking new materials and transporting materials in secret programs. Israel, South Africa, all of that, and it was this Policy Planning Staff with this guy who kind of made that an issue that we worried about. People had the right to argue the points and provoke major high-level meetings. So that was a creative role, and that's something Policy Planning can do.

Q: Were you picking up one of these sort of interesting policy splits that eventually ended up in the Helsinki Agreement, and you mentioned Basket Three and all that and I guess the Final Act negotiations? You know I've heard from people like George Vest that Kissinger was sort of denigrating the Helsinki negotiations because he was interested in his own thing and this was sort of a side thing, and it in many ways turned out to be a crucial element in East-West relations.

SIMONS: Yeah, I think the Administration, and Kissinger himself, considered Helsinki a sideshow. It was something that the Soviets had wanted and something that the Europeans liked because it gave them multilateral cover including the U.S. for the development of relations across the East-West divide, East and West Germany for instance. We didn't consider it anything that was much in our interest. We considered it mainly a payoff for MBFR, which we wanted to go on forever without resolution in order to dampen the pressure for unilateral U.S. withdrawals from Europe. You have to remember that it was not a buoyant time for American political morale. The Administration, with Vietnam and Watergate, you know, it felt it was playing a very weak hand and sort of had to compensate for American weakness relatively. They felt that the Soviets were getting stronger and that we were softening if not weakening, and that you had to compensate for that by cleverness. It didn't feel that the wind was in America's sails. It's hard to remember how demoralizing the decade of the 1970s was, both under late Nixon as long as the Vietnam War went on and then under Carter. So

with young people, I found trying to teach international relations in the 20th Century at Stanford from 1998 on, that it's very hard to convey to young people that sort of sadness of the 1970s. So, no, I mean George Vest was absolutely right. George Vest became a good friend during those years because he was our negotiator for Helsinki and doing MBFR I was sort of a backup for CSCE and trying to be supportive. I actually gave George Vest a Polish poster supporting the European Security Conference. It was a wonderful blue poster with a dove, and he put it up back of his desk in the Department, and that was kind of a statement at the time and he never forgot that poster.

But no, the Administration didn't care much about it. It also didn't care much about human rights, because it saw human rights -- and I think partially accurately -- you also have to remember that human rights was also a battering ram used by the enemies of détente to slow the speed of détente -- it was sort of packed into the Helsinki process partly in order to make sure it wouldn't be just a give-away to the Soviets, just as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was designed to prevent the follow-up that the Soviets expected from the SALT I Interim Agreement, which was a huge payoff in economic relations. By preventing us from giving them Most-Favored-Nation tariff treatment unless they signed up to free emigration, which meant emigration of Jews, Jackson-Vanik was designed to slow down and to constrain the urge for détente, which the people supporting it considered it an urge to give away, to let down our guard against the Soviet threat. So I don't think it is unnatural that Kissinger would have been suspicious of these things, because they were directed against him.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Kissinger personality, his method of operation, in that year that you were there?

SIMONS: Just by indirection. You know, just really by watching him and by listening to Winston and talking about it. I mean '74 was the year of Watergate and things got sort of worse and worse. I can remember the day that Nixon resigned. Winston sort of calling us altogether and saying, "Now we've got to remember he was a good foreign policy President." But I think sort of, the anger and desperation, you got hints of that, you know, just bits and pieces of it. Also I helped prepare that last desperate trip to Moscow to try to get Brezhnev to support him that summer, and the Soviets at that point weren't playing, so it was a trip without result. You started to get that feeling of desperation and unhappiness. It was the Romanians during that summer that confirmed it. I knew the Number Two in the Romanian Embassy quite well, and their Ambassador who was a great diplomat. I knew all the East European embassies as well as the Poles. But Ceausescu came, and my friend said that after the Embassy party which my wife and I had gone to and loved, Ceausescu gathered the staff down in the embassy basement, the Romanian staff, and gave them a lecture about Nixon -- who is of course in bad, bad trouble, the Supreme Court decision against executive privilege maybe not out yet, but anyway in deep trouble -- and Ceausescu harangued the Romanian Embassy staff on the theme that there are men of destiny and Richard Nixon is one of them.

Q: Also, I think at the time Ceausescu had not turned into the monster he later became. That was in the '80s. I think anybody looking at this should remember we're talking about another Ceausescu that we're looking at.

SIMONS: At that point Romania was running down its oil and getting more and more dependent economically on the Soviets, but anyway, no, no, Ceausescu was not the monster he became in the '80s at that point. But those were the things I sort of did on Policy Planning.

Q: Well, then when you were dealing with, we really didn't have policy on the Balkans, were we looking at that time after Tito was gone?

SIMONS: That was a hardy perennial of contingency planning, but it didn't seem to have a lot of urgency to it in the mid-'70s. What we were dealing with was Poland. I can remember getting myself in trouble with the U.S. Embassy because Gierek was I think the first official visitor to newly installed President Ford in the fall of '74. Poland was still in the middle of an economic boom that was funded by massive borrowing in the West, massive borrowing on Western credit that Gierek then used to purchase technology in the hope that by plugging this technology into an unreformed Polish economic system he could raise productivity to the point where he could pay off these debts. That all broke down beginning in 1975. But in '74 he was riding high, or looked as if he was riding high, and this was accompanied by some real additional liberalism in the Polish political system, a lot of consultation, dialogue, lightened censorship, things of that sort. The briefing papers our Embassy sent in for the visit were sort of paeans of praise, I mean hosannahs; you thought you'd be dealing with St. John the Baptist, maybe not the savior who is to come but pretty high up there. I kept chopping these things back, warning about this debt, what this debt was going to do if this gamble on borrowing and growth on Western credit didn't pay off. In the end, the whole house of cards began to collapse the next year, and that's what led to Solidarity in 1979. But of course by then I was in Moscow and Bucharest.

MOSCOW (1975-1977)

Q: Well then, you left Policy Planning when?

SIMONS: I left in January of 1975 and started taking Russian here at FSI (the Foreign Service Institute, now NFATC) with my wife. It was a very unsatisfactory learning experience. I've learned three languages here, and two of them were wonderful and Russian was not.

Q: Why not?

SIMONS: Well, we had a brilliant teacher whom many people liked, but who didn't like me, and who didn't like my wife, who had to leave early in the day -- we had two small children -- early every day. She didn't like spouses anyway, and for both of us our unsightliness was compounded by the strong Polish accent that we started learning

Russian with; some Russians will claim they find it charming, but they really don't. It took us most of our tour in Moscow actually to scrub the Polish accent out of our Russian. Anyway Madame de la Cruz was angry at me, short-tempered. I mean we just did it for six months, then we had to go out to post. So that was the first half of 1975.

Then we went to Moscow and arrived the day of the signature of the Helsinki Final Act. Gerald Ford signed in Helsinki, and he was savagely criticized by the right wing of the Republican Party for selling out. That was an election issue the next year in the primary against Ronald Reagan. But anyway there we were in Moscow. The way I got to Moscow took some Foreign Service conniving. There I was in Policy Planning in '74 without much of a job. I mean I've described the things I did, which were fine, but it was not particularly a full time job. And if you start in Eastern Europe in the Foreign Service in that day and age, and if you like Eastern Europe, you probably should be smart enough to realize that you can't build a career just on Eastern Europe. You have to attach it either to Germany, as many people did, or to the Soviet Union. In other words you had the same dilemma as Eastern Europe itself, you can't go forward on your own, you sort of come down to being somebody's client. For me the opportunity opened up because Walter Stoessel, who had been my Ambassador in Warsaw and who liked me and who had then came back as Assistant Secretary for European Affairs in those early years, was going to Moscow. It was very hard for somebody like me who had not been there before to get a job in Moscow at what had become my rank, because Jack Matlock was the Director for Soviet Affairs and was adamant that only people who had been there as junior officers should go back at what was then Class Three level. Warren Zimmerman had been an exception. He had taken the job as Chief of External Reporting in the Political Section, the head of the sub-unit that reported on Soviet foreign policy, even though he had also not been there. He had a Yugoslav background as I had a Polish background. So what I did was go to Stoessel through Joan Clark, who was Director of Personnel at that time in EUR, and I got him to ask for me; so that's how I got to Moscow in the summer of '75.

Q: So after Russian training you went to Moscow from when to when?

SIMONS: I went to Moscow from August of 1975 to February of 1977, so just 18 months.

Q: What was your job?

SIMONS: I was Chief of the External Reporting sub-unit in the Political Section. The section had about 10 people under a Counselor, divided into two units, one for internal reporting, domestic politics, and one for external reporting, foreign policy. Almost everyone who served in those units in that era later became an ambassador.

Q: Who was the head of the section?

SIMONS: Marshall Brement was the Political Counselor. Jack Matlock became the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), and Walter Stoessel was there as Ambassador. Matlock was DCM and later Ambassador. Marshall Brement, who was later Ambassador to Iceland

having been Jeane Kirkpatrick's deputy at the UN (United Nations) for a while, was the Political Counselor with his wonderful new wife. He had been the Public Affairs Counselor in Saigon and had met there a journalist from Time or Newsweek named Pamela something and married her. They were there as kind of newlyweds. He had served there before. He was a China expert, a very, very bright man, a very fluent man, not a particularly active man, I should say, but maybe if you're a newlywed that happens.

Q: The External unit, who was in it?

SIMONS: I was the chief of External, and I tended to do Europe and what there was of Eastern Europe. Darryl Johnson, who is currently Ambassador to Thailand, was the China person and did Asia. The Middle East when I came was Jim Collins, who later became Ambassador to Russia. There was Dick Miles who is currently retiring from his fourth ambassadorship - he is now Ambassador to Georgia – and he came in to do Africa. I forget who did Latin America, I think maybe Miles did. Mike Joyce and then Ted McNamara did arms control. Anyway there were five of us. Similarly, in the Internal section you had Joe Presel who did dissidents. The head of it was Dick Combs who later became my deputy on the Soviet desk and then Art Hartman's DCM in Moscow.

It was a group of really very talented people. It was a joy to be there. Stu, this was the détente plateau. In other words the breakthroughs had been made, but they had opened doors in Moscow. You could call up and get appointments to see very interesting people and have lunch with people. At the same time not much was going on in relations, because the Soviets were starting to wait for the 1976 elections. They were watching. You know Nixon had resigned. You had Ford as sort of an interim president although he was going to run. But it was not a time for big bold negotiations. The last effort to do that was in February of 1976 when Kissinger made his last visit to Moscow to negotiate on SALT II. After he had left, the record later showed, Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense, at the time with political ambitions, had changed Kissinger's instructions, had just taken the guts out of Kissinger's instructions, so he was left there in Moscow high and dry sort of begging the Soviets for a gesture. I had a 104-degree fever for that visit and got up at four every morning to read and summarize the Soviet press for the party. But I did get to go with a fever like that to the lunch that Kissinger gave for Gromyko at Spaso House, and I can remember walking in with Bill Hyland who was a confidant of Kissinger's and having him say, "There's no one left in our government who has a sense of the national interest." So that was kind of the end of détente, for the time being at least, until through to the election. But for someone like me who was new to the Soviet Union -- I mean I knew a lot about it of course but was new to actually being there and dealing in Russian with the Soviets -- it was a wonderful time to be there, because the doors were open but I wasn't required to do things where I could stumble. It was a great learning assignment.

Q: Well here you are, I mean you had served in Poland so you got a feel for a socialist country and how it operated. Do a little compare-and-contrast when you went to the Soviet Union? What you were seeing about how things worked, didn't work and all that.

SIMONS: Well, I mean the Soviet Union was much more powerful and self-aware as a great power and much more monolithic because of the system. It was more concerned with discipline, it was more secretive, it was more frightening. People were more frightened. You got the sense of fear. It was also less developed. We travelled around the country as much as we could, and actually loved it and liked Russians, but there was kind of fearfulness about it you didn't have in Poland. It was more of a police state and more backward; there was less availability of goods and services. But Peggy and I are not people who care much about creature comforts so that didn't bother us very much. We thought they were a great and talented people living under a police regime that was chastened and subdued, but still a police regime.

Q: Were you able to get out and sample the Russian soul or anything? In other words, were there any places where you could go take a look and see what was going on?

SIMONS: From time to time you were able to do that when you travelled. Well, we had friends in Moscow. We had friends who were on the fringes of the diplomatic colony. They were mainly artists. Very many of them were kind of black-sheep children of senior officials, so that they would be sort of punished but only up to a point. I mean we had a dear friend who sort of drank himself to death while we were there, who was a very late son of the great Soviet novelist Konstantin Paustovsky, with his young wife and their child. He was an artist, not a very good artist; but he'd been sent out to Kyrgyzstan to dry out at a certain point -- you know, the end of the world -- but then he'd been let back and was still allowed, still given permission to see people like us. You know you go to their parties and sort of drink with them, and you assumed that there was a police presence, but you could still make friends with them.

I remember we gave a party in our apartment there and all these artists came and we were playing tapes of Vladimir Vysotsky, the great folk singer and cabaret singer, and people were smoking marijuana cigarettes in our little diplomatic apartment there. The next week Jacques Amalric, who was the correspondent for Le Monde -- he later became editor-in-chief of Le Monde in Paris – was having lunch with me in the American Embassy cafeteria, and he said, "You know my nanny," i.e. the Soviet journalist who was assigned to cover him, "my nanny asks me why people are smoking pot in Tom Simons' apartment." So I said, "Well, let me see what I can do about that." So I went to a couple of these artists and I said, "If I ever hear about this again, none of you will ever sell a painting to a diplomat again." Of course it was a threat that I had no possible way of making good on, but I never heard anything again. The police were kind of all around, but you could still make friends.

You got more insights by travelling, because you didn't always have a policeman in your carriage. I can remember we were travelling in the northwest, Pskov and Novgorod, and there was a man there in our compartment who had been off trying to sell some Asiatic plaster casts that he made himself at home to some store. It turned out he was a magician, an amateur magician, son of a Polish aristocrat who lived over on the Estonian border in a town where one of Russia's greatest monasteries is, Pechory, and he said, "Come see us." I said, "Okay, well maybe we will." So when we were in Pskov and we finished

sightseeing, we went down to the taxi bank and asked the taxi guy, "Can you take us to Pechory?" He said, "Sure." So we got in and we were not being followed. We looked this guy up, spent the night with him, went to the monastery. His little daughter came out in her tutu and did little magic tricks for us, and we talked to them about what it was like to grow up in a place like that. He is actually of Polish descent. So you could sort of get insights. We didn't press people to hate the regime. You just had more or less normal social interchanges and you do get some feel for what the country was like. It was a country that was not very dynamic. It had reached a certain level of prosperity. People were proud that Russia was respected in the world. They didn't much like living under a police regime, but that was the way things were and they were getting three squares a day, and it was better than before. So it was that kind of a place.

Q: Well, did you sort of -- you and the other officers -- realize that you were in a state of stasis or something like this? Often you don't know that until after you are away from it.

SIMONS: I think so. I think we did. The only serious negotiation that was going on was something on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions where Stoessel was the chief of our delegation. It was something that came out of those agreements in '72. I think we actually reached some kind of conclusion on that, but that maybe it was never ratified. But you know it went at a fairly stately pace, and you knew there was no umph. Then I was the control officer again for Governor Harriman when he came out in the summer of '76 on behalf of candidate Jimmy Carter to kind of assure the Soviet leadership that Carter wouldn't break any crockery, so that they didn't have to worry about a Democratic victory even though they had been very attached by détente to the Republican Administration. The Soviets tended to prefer the devil they knew. It's also true that Harriman later felt betrayed by Carter, because after he won Carter did start breaking a lot of crockery by writing letters to Sakharov and stuff like that. Yeah, I think people felt that not much was happening, but they enjoyed being there. They enjoyed the kind of access to the Soviet system that détente had opened up for us.

Q: Well, what about the Helsinki Accords, and particularly Basket Three that dealt with human rights, movement of people and the like, that eventually became a wedge that changed quite a bit of things in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union? But at that time was that seen as anything?

SIMONS: It was seen as a good small thing. In other words the day I got there Izvestiya, the government paper, the so-called government paper, published the entire text of the Helsinki Final Act. That was one of our requirements and that was great. Then you knew because you were in touch with dissidents. I knew most of the major dissidents through Joe Presel, who was the "dissident officer" back then.

Q: Whom I'm interviewing now.

SIMONS: That's great. He would kind of stagger in in the morning, red-eyed and hung over from his nights with the dissidents, and Mac Toon didn't like that when Toon became his Ambassador, but he'll tell you about that himself. The dissidents began to use

the Helsinki Final Act as their cover for the kinds of objections and dissent that they were doing in Soviet society. I remember writing the cable, the analytical cable from Moscow when the Helsinki Final Act was signed, and I remember writing that the Soviets signed the Helsinki Final Act "with clear, dry eyes." They didn't expect whatever changes it was going to make in the way they operated were going to be intolerable to them, or were going to threaten the system; otherwise they wouldn't have signed it.

Q: Well basically what they got was stabilization of the borders.

SIMONS: That's right, and of the whole political status quo in Europe.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I mean that was useful to them, but then they immediately went charging on the theme of following up on military détente with political detente. Then they of course had wanted the economic benefits too, and that was what Jackson and the Jackson-Vanik Amendment kind of brought to a screeching halt. If you remember, Helmut Sonnenfeldt was going to be an Under Secretary over in the Department of Commerce or the Treasury kind of running a vast expansion of U.S.-Soviet economic relations, and he couldn't get himself confirmed, and that just never happened. So I think the Soviets were disappointed, but I don't think they were afraid in any way. They thought they could control whatever effects Helsinki had. I think in the end there is something to it. They had trouble in Eastern Europe, but in the Soviet Union they managed to control their dissidents until the very end.

Q: Looking at their external affairs, were any other countries, you know Romania or Hungary or Poland or anything, or France or Germany, were things happening during this period?

SIMONS: We're talking about 1976, and 1976 of course was the death of Mao in China, a very important event, and we would report on that. It was very early days, it was very hard to tell. I think it meant a lot in the end but it was hard to tell then.

Q: Yeah, it was still too soon.

SIMONS: Yeah, very hard to tell what the impact of that would be. You had major struggles in Africa, which were a major issue in relations with the Soviets, because you had the decolonization of Portuguese Africa and Cuban troops in Angola and in Ethiopia I think, or in the Horn of Africa. That was a major issue in our relations with the Soviets. Kissinger kept warning them that you're not going to be able to sustain détente if you keep doing these things in the Third World that make it look as if you are carrying the struggle forward there. I remember talking to my best friend in the Soviet establishment, Yuriy Gankovskiy. He was an Afghanistan expert whose father had been shot in 1937, and he had rehabilitated himself by leading 50 infantry charges in World War II and surviving, and then he became a scholar of Asia because he couldn't get any closer to the centers of power. But he was a great Afghan expert, and became a great advisor later

during their Afghanistan war. I remember saying to him, "You know, Yuriy Vladimirovich, we learned a lesson in Vietnam, but if you keep doing what you're doing in Africa we can unlearn it. You're doing well in the world and now is the time for statesmanship and your leadership is old." He looked at me and he said, "My dear Tom, I wish you for yourself what you're recommending for them, but think of it this way: they have no more appetite, they don't care about women, all they care about at their age is keeping power." So that was part of the Soviet stasis as well as the kind of adventurism in the Third World which we saw, because we covered the foreign affairs parts and the Internal section covered the internal affairs part of the 25th Party Congress, which was I think in February of '76. There you could see on stage these African revolutionaries shouting from the podium about how the world correlation of forces was shifting and they were the vanguard of socialism. And we saw Mikhail Suslov, who was the ideological guy on the Politburo, leaping out of his chair and pulling his translation plug out of his ear in his enthusiasm for this kind of thing. So they really had something going with national liberation movements, and it was dangerous to our relationship. So that was an element of things. But we were just watching that; we weren't doing anything.

Q: I'm not sure, when you were there what was the situation in Portugal? Was it still up in the air?

SIMONS: Portugal was still dicey.

Q: I mean I've talked to Frank Carlucci and others who were involved, a very important thing in that time. but what about the view from Moscow of that situation?

SIMONS: Well, I can remember Marshall Brement asking me. He had been on a vacation in the Iberian Peninsula and he came back and said, "Tom, we've got to write a cable on Spain and Portugal." I said, "Well, Marshall, we don't know anything about what the Soviet view is. Let me go see somebody; let me talk to somebody about what the Soviet view is of Spain." He said, "No, no, we've got to get it out right away." So I wrote it off the top of my head just from kind of reading the newspapers. So we did report on it. Our reporting was that if Spain and Portugal kind of go in a socialist direction the Soviets will be happy, but they're not promoting revolution in NATO's backyard. I think that was kind of where we saw it. So for them it was really sort of Africa, with China on the horizon, but the U.S. was the big apple. You know relations with the United States and the strategic equation were really sort of the main thing for them. That went cold after that visit by Kissinger early in '76. I was struck years later when the George W. Bush administration came to power and Rumsfeld was appointed Secretary of Defense again, and Kissinger was asked to comment. I read in the paper that he said, "I think it's a wonderful appointment because now he has no higher political ambitions;" because it was that that led him to undercut Kissinger there in early '76.

Q: Were we looking at that time at the Politburo, and as your Russian friend was saying, were we seeing these guys as a geriatric adventurous group? Often when people get older they get more cautious.

SIMONS: Well, we were seeing the people who were on it as geriatric, as aging, devoted to stability. I remember going to see Roy Medvedev, who was sort of a Marxist dissident. I mean he was from the apparatus. He was the one who wrote Let History Judge, anti-Stalinist things. But we had access to major intellectuals like that. I remember him saying to me, "Brezhnev is the best you are ever going to get, because he doesn't want trouble." Well, the truth is he didn't want trouble in relations with us, or in all the other major things, I mean in Europe or even with China. But I think that the revolutionary outlet was the national liberation movements.

But they also thought things were going their way, so they felt that they were just doing not much. We thought that they were going great guns, paying for the Cuban troops in Africa and the like, and that this was very adventurist. I think they just thought they were supporting national liberation as the way history was going. It turned out history wasn't going that way, and what they were doing was going to help to reverse that when Ronald Reagan came to power. It's just my feeling -- it's a theory that I've developed recently in trying to teach this period at Stanford -- that the establishments of both countries were forced toward stabilization of the international situation, but they were queasy about the loss of ardor and fidelity to principles, the national political principles, that this involved. In this country it took the form of fear of a sellout to Communism, and the way we kept our principles intact was to promote human rights. In the Soviet Union it was fear of a sellout of revolutionary ardor for proletarian revolution, and the way they kept their principles and consciousness intact was support for national liberation. They wanted to keep it kind of separate. I can remember during the '80s, working this brief from Washington, how hard they tried to say, we can talk about bilateral relations, we can talk about arms control, but regional crises are out of bounds. They are not a proper subject for conversation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. We're merely supporting the forces of history that are out there. So they tried to put up a firebreak and isolate these things from each other, and of course we wouldn't let this happen, beginning also with Carter, beginning with Afghanistan.

Q: Yeah, well, I was going to say -- this is after your time there -- but this movement with Afghanistan was almost the beginning of the end. It was a little bit like the Athenians heading for Syracuse or something like that.

SIMONS: But that came at the end of the Carter Administration, which was a time when I was no longer in it; I was in Romania and then in London. I think it perplexed them. They couldn't figure the Americans out. We looked just so confused and incompetent that by the time they really felt under pressure in Afghanistan, they thought they were going to be losing a country that was near-socialist and a neighbor, and that they had to do something desperate, so they tried to do a Czechoslovakia. By that time I think they had kind of written off the Carter Administration, after the Cuban brigade incident, and after seeing how hard it was to get to the end of the road on SALT II which had basically been negotiated by Ford at Vladivostok in November of 1974. It took four years to turn it into an agreement. So I think they had kind of washed their hands of the Carter Administration and felt that whatever its reaction they still had to do what they had to do

in Afghanistan. During my time, in '75 looking at Africa, '75 and '76 – and the fall of Saigon was in April I think wasn't it -?

Q: April of '75.

SIMONS: …in my time there they felt that things were going their way without much effort from them. Later on I think they thought that Afghanistan was more drastic.

Q: How was our Bicentennial, July '76, how was that celebrated in Moscow?

SIMONS: We had a party in Spaso House, and Gromyko came, and I can remember talking to the America desk officer in the Central Committee International Affairs Department, I forget his name. He had a gold tooth, he was very Soviet, old-fashioned Soviet, and he had written an editorial that day in Pravda about the American Communist Party, with its respected leader Gus Hall, as the vanguard of the American working class. I don't think I asked him whether he really believed that or not.

Q: You know the American Communist Party is a play thing of intellectuals and…

SIMONS: …and of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

Q: I think the FBI supported it.

SIMONS: Well, I think probably the majority of the Central Committee were FBI. Anyway we didn't know at that time about Operation Venona, or I didn't until much later, where we were tapping their files or we'd broken their code. But that was just the sign of the stodginess of the Soviet sort of thing. Then we had a very moving time at the American Embassy dacha outside Moscow, and I remember it especially because I was Master of Ceremonies, everybody else was on vacation. That was 200 years of the United States in a setting like that, sort of isolated and in kind of hostile territory. It made you appreciate everything we are. I should recount another aspect that ran like a thread through that tour in Moscow, which was the microwave crisis that broke during the time I was there. The Ambassador and DCM had kept it quiet while Kissinger, I think, but certainly the Administration had pressed the Soviets to stop it, to stop microwaving our Embassy. They had refused to do so, so at that point we had to break it to the staff. It caused a lot of fear and unhappiness, especially I remember Carol Niles, Tom Niles' wife, standing up in back and she's from Kentucky like him, I think, and had this rich sort of border-state accent, wailing "I conceived a CHI-ULD in this Embassy." So there was fear and I think there were lawsuits, there were later lawsuits.

Q: Oh yeah. Well, we didn't play that very well. This is the time when it was sort of "what you don't know won't hurt you."

SIMONS: It was, there was more of a stiff upper lip kind of thing, but we did break it, and we did sort of try to make a dialogue about it, getting it out and treating people who had been subject to it.

Q: Was there every any thought of saying, "Look, Soviets, if you want to play this game we're shutting our embassy down."

SIMONS: I don't think so, I don't think there was. I think that would have been the thought for Jesse Helms, but not for the Administration.

Q: But I mean the thing was serious enough.

SIMONS: Well, I think it is probably true. I mean Mrs. Stoessel won't say so, but in the end it probably killed Walter Stoessel, because he died of leukemia years later. Back then he had to go out and get treatment; he was bright red. It turned out that the two waves of microwaves crossed in his office. I don't think that was purposeful, I think they were trying to get at our machinery on the floor above. But if you're living through that it's hard to be sunny about Soviet society or the people that you are up against.

Q: Did you ever run across or deal with, or was he even a figure then, Arbatov?

SIMONS: Oh yeah, we dealt with him.

Q: This was an American-Canadian institute or something?

SIMONS: Yeah, Georgy Arbatov was head of the USA and Canada Institute of the Academy of Sciences, which was an institute that we considered a force for good and Lord knows he told us that he was a force for good. He had worked his way up, and he had a lot of expertise in the Institute. He was one of our regular contacts partly because people spoke wonderful English there. But even if they didn't they were knowledgeable and they had license to be with us so that was useful. Arbatov had gotten himself in the détente years into a position of I think quite a trusted advisor of the leadership on U.S. affairs. He attempted to continue that, but by the same token he was sort of ground down in the decline of détente, and had to get sort of nastier and nastier about exclusive U.S. responsibility for the decline of détente; so he got more and more orthodox as time went on. But at that time, no, he was a valued person who was considered a force for good.

Q: How about the art of Kremlinology, of reading the papers? Had that matured or was that almost a thing of the past?

SIMONS: No, no, we could still do it, it had matured too. Dick Combs was an expert at it, the head of the Internal section; for the Party Congress he predicted by the placement of people that there would be these departures and that these people we in trouble. But it only takes you so far. It was a very solidary leadership and very secretive.

Q: Well, from a practical point of view up to a certain point, you know, one of the great coups I'm sure in the political field was who was going to replace whom; did it make any difference? I mean until Gorbachev came along, but up to that point, looking back on it.

SIMONS: I think it did because it took until 1972 for Brezhnev to consolidate his position. I think he had to fire the Ukrainian Party chief who was the opponent of what they were trying to do with the United States, I forget the man's name, but he had been sent in there to quash Ukrainian nationalism, and they had to fire him for Brezhnev to reach the ascendancy that he reached in 1972, and it took that for us to be able to proceed with détente, with the treaties that we negotiated and signed, with the whole skein of cooperative agreements that were put in place. So Kremlinology was important then. Once Brezhnev was consolidated, his position was pretty good. I remember Stoessel presented his credentials to Podgorny and I got to go, or Toon did later on and I got to go to that, got my picture taken. No, it was not so important between Brezhnev's consolidation in 1972 and the really serious beginnings of Brezhnev's decline in the late '70s. So in my time it was not terribly important. I mean the party congress, the 25th Party Congress that I covered, was a very staged affair; like the Democratic Party convention next week, it was going to be a celebration of the status quo. It's going to be a celebration of Kerry in this case. No, at that time Kremlinology was not essential, but later on and earlier it was. So it was a skill that kind of needed to be kept up.

Q: Did you get any feeling -- we talked about this before -- by the time you left, that you might say that maybe the greatest analytical failure was not realizing how weak the Soviet Union was in many of the essentials, particularly its economy and the ethnic divisions; but was this apparent to anybody there? Were you thinking of the thousand-year Reich and the thousand-year Soviet Union?

SIMONS: The way that played out for us there was that it was more difficult for us than for other Americans to see the Soviet Union as really a dynamic threat to the United States. Now that didn't mean that we knew the economy was a third the size of ours, and I mentioned earlier in these interviews they were a very powerful military force, and that tended to skew judgments. But watching the Soviet economy work, the civilian economy, I mean even then it's a dual economy, with an efficient military sector and inefficient civilian sector. There were some aspects of that, sort of like Indonesia under the Dutch: you know, the plantation economy and then the native economy. It was very hard for us to see the Soviet Union overwhelming us or kind of overtaking us. I think that put us on one side of the argument about how to deal with the Soviet Union. I think most of the people that served there feel, you know, "steady as you go, treat them like adults, don't pamper them." You got a basic confidence that the United States is able to deal with whatever threat the Soviet Union poses to us. We certainly didn't feel that they were ideologically a threat. It was hard for us to see how they were examples to the rest of the world in anything but the military side. In other words, it was sort of the East European dilemma after 1968. Of course in our country there were people who for a whole variety of reasons that I think are just being researched were very afraid of the Soviet Union and really felt it was an up-and-coming threat, the thousand-year Reich as you put it.

Q: This is tape 4, side 1, with Tom Simons.

SIMONS: I mean I'll just tell two personal anecdotes. We put our daughter in a Soviet school, a Special School focused on English, and it was a wonderful experience. Once we

got her in -- they didn't want to take her, we sort of had to lean on UPDK, the diplomatic administration, to get her in -- but once she was in she was treated like a queen. She was seven at the time. She learned Russian, wonderful Russian, by Christmas. We were treated just as parents. In other words we were called over when she had disciplinary problems, we were called over for the little festivities that take place on various occasions -- when you finish the first reading book all the parents are called -- things of that sort. And just being a parent it occurred to me, first, that it is a collective experience, because all the children are beloved by their teachers, and that allows the teachers to be draconian in terms of intellectual performance. It is sort of different from us where everybody is supposed to be at the top intellectually. That's not true there. But on the other hand everybody there knows that they are valued as a human being. It's a great virtue of the Soviet school. The other thing was that going to these little performances, like finishing the first book, I remember once saying to myself, with a shock of recognition, that this was like being in first grade in St. Paul, Minnesota, during the War, because three things were being celebrated there too: first, learning; second, upward social mobility – learning will get you ahead; and third, by learning you serve the country. In other words that learning was going to make our lives better and serve the country. There is a lot of patriotism sort of built in. So you have that about the Soviets. Again, you know, we ended up sort of respecting a lot of things about the Soviet system but not being afraid of them.

Then at the very last, I think the Soviet administration kind of liked me. They thought I was constructive because we liked to go out and visit old churches, my wife and I, around the Moscow area but elsewhere too. We had been trying to get to a church in a place called Pereslavl-Zalessky almost ever since we had arrived, and we had always been refused permission by whatever route we put in for "for reasons of a temporary nature." Whatever route we put in for, whether we were coming from Vladimir-Suzdal or coming from Yaroslavl to get to this place in the middle of the Golden Circle, as it is called, the old cities around Moscow or northeast of Moscow, we were turned down. Then in January of 1977, just before we were leaving, with the temperature at 40 below -- and 40 below is where Fahrenheit and Centigrade cross -- we put in one last time, we were leaving in two weeks and we put in this last time to go by train, and they gave us permission. The train left Moscow at 14 minutes after midnight and got in at 5+ in the morning to this little town, and it came back the next night at midnight plus and got into Moscow at 5 a.m. plus. So we got into this town. I remember 40 below. Your spit froze before it hit the ground; you could not spend more than half an hour outside. You had to go into a local cafeteria, and it was a meatless day and when we went in there for lunch we were overwhelmed by police spies asking us if we were interested in military secrets. It was a town where time had stopped. The church was beautiful, by the way; it was a 14th century church with Persian motifs on the walls, a mystery how they got up there, lovely. But you felt the quietness of Russian country life; the shopping center, you know the place where they sold the household goods and stuff of that sort, must have been built in brick in 1880, and hadn't changed. Women were still washing clothes by cutting holes through the ice in that place. (We also discovered why it was so hard to get to: we went to a Hindi movie in the afternoon to get out of the cold, and were surrounded by skinheads, first-year soldiers; it was a training area for the Soviet Army.) You really got the feeling,

partly of a world at peace (aside from the police spy) but also of a world that was not very dynamic. Again, why would our country, such a dynamic country, be threatened by this unless they sort of went crazy with their weapons? I think that that was sort of it.

Q: That was the great fear.

SIMONS: That was the nightmare. I never had any doubt myself that our country, if we got our own act together, could easily deal with the Soviet threat.

BUCHAREST (1977-1979)

Q: Well, then you left there in 1977?

SIMONS: '77, winter of '77. What had happened was that Harry Barnes, who was an old Moscow hand who was then Ambassador to Romania in Bucharest, asked for me. I had known him since he was taking Romanian to go out there in 1968 as DCM, and I was taking Polish, so we knew each other from FSI and liked each other. He came through Moscow and asked Walter Stoessel to detach me so I could come and be his DCM. I took the job. In other words I agreed to leave early, to come back and learn Romanian. Then after I had committed myself to that job, my boss Political Counselor Marshall Brement got PNG'd when he was on vacation; it was pure retaliation for an expulsion that we had done at the UN, some Soviet doing espionage there. So there was no Political Counselor. I was elevated temporarily to be Acting Political Counselor, which was a thrill. I discovered that Jack Matlock as DCM was not the ogre that Marshall had portrayed him for my consumption heretofore, but was a wonderful sort of sensible, reasonable, intelligent colleague rather than a demanding sort of boss. Marshall had a knack of trying to sell people below him with the idea that he was protecting them. That turned out not to be true, and I think it is true that Jack then recommended me to be made permanent Political Counselor, but I was already committed to Bucharest. So Bill Brown came in, a wonderful man, later in the year. That's how I left.

Q: Well, were you there when Toon took over?

SIMONS: Just barely. I had about a month or two.

Q: I was wondering whether you know, he sounded like an irascible type of person. I mean you know when the going gets tough, they send in the sons of bitches.

SIMONS: Maybe that was it, but I think he was kind of chosen before. I'm not sure how he was chosen, whether it was a new Administration choice. I've always had decent relationships with him. I had him just for a month there. It was perfectly sort of cordial, but of course he knew I was leaving and I knew I was leaving. So I think I always felt he didn't treat Joe Presel well who has been a friend ever since. I don't think he rewarded him adequately for a good job he did with the dissidents. I think Toon is old-fashioned enough to think that dissidents were not something the U.S. Government should preoccupy itself with. He sort of was uncomfortable with what that job might be; he

understood the Soviet objection of interference in their internal affairs. But anyway I can't say that I'm sorry I didn't serve longer.

Q: What about Romania, you took Romanian for how long?

SIMONS: I took Romanian for 18 weeks and I got a 3+ 4, speaking 3+ reading 4. I had a wonderful teacher named Chiacu. He was really quite a drillmaster and a vivacious, tempestuous kind of personality with a wonderful wife who is still alive. He taught me Romanian. I had French before and some Italian, so I had both the Slavic and the Latin base to do Romanian and loved it. My wife, with our two young children, went out to her home in Chillicothe, Ohio, so there was a separation which I didn't enjoy, but she took Romanian at Ohio State, and we came together again that summer and went out to Bucharest.

Q: Romania in the summer of 1977: what was it like at that time and what was the state of America-Romanian relations?

SIMONS: The country was a beautiful, not very prosperous country, a very complex country. It's a fairly large country by East European standards, and it's kind of gathered, it had two main parts. First is the Transylvanian Plateau, a big circle in the middle, which is mountains and uplands, historically part of the Habsburg Empire although earlier a tributary to the Ottomans until the Habsburgs took it in the late 17th century. Then clustered around that mountain circle were the two historic provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. Then you had the seacoast, which had a tourist industry that was attractive, and the Danube sort of runs through the country and then gives into the Black Sea there, great birding which I never did. But anyway an attractive country with a sort of appealing population that on the one hand sort of lacks Slavic gravity; it's more lively and rambunctious. Also it's had a history that does not encourage self-esteem, so there is a kind of a lack of confidence about Romania in a sense that you have to compensate by cleverness for the weakness vis-à-vis the predators who surround you. I don't know if that's one of the things that made Kissinger and Nixon like Romania, because they had a little of the same approach in American terms. But anyway our relations were good.

They had begun to improve when the Romanians had treated Nixon well when he was out of office. The Romanian Party had broken with the Soviet Party over Comecon strengthening in the early 1960s, in '64, still under Gheorghiu-Dej, who was the old Stalinist survivor. Then Ceausescu had replaced him in 1965. We had supported that independence. Nixon went there I think in 1969 and paid an official visit to Romania after Ceausescu had refused to join the invasion of Czechoslovakia and had really trod the patriotic pedal. I mean the Romanian nationalist pedal in order to capture public support, which he did. In other words I had friends in the intelligentsia from old boyar/noble families who'd always been anti-Communist. I had one whose aunts, when Romania was admitted to the UN in 1955 finally, punished the West by boycotting the BBC: they no longer listened to BBC broadcasts in protest against this scandal. But people like that joined the Party in 1968, so that the Party kind of nationalised itself under Ceausescu.

Our relations became better. Ceausescu had accepted the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Romania had a Jewish population, which he allowed to leave, if slowly, and in return for that in 1975 we granted Romania Most-Favored-Nation tariff treatment. It was subject to annual review, which was contentious as to whether we should be giving Romania benefits when they were still a dictatorship, which they were.

But I should say that my period there from 1977 to 1979 was a good period. We could travel around the country, we could meet people, we could make friends. Harry Barnes was a great introducer. He sponsored me in and introduced me to all these people. Of course he is a vivid, dynamic personality, as you know. Then he left me high and dry. I arrived in August, and he came back in November to be Director General of the Foreign Service, I became Charge, and he was then replaced by a very fine career officer, O. Rudolph Aggrey, an African-American officer, then Ambassador to Senegal. He didn't know a lot about Eastern Europe, Communist Europe, and was willing to accept advice from me. He attached a lot of importance to presentation, in the way the Embassy looked, to housing. He had a wonderful French wife. He liked to entertain nobly. In short he was interested in lots of DCM-type things, and so I had an ideal DCMship, where I had a lot to do with the policy and the Ambassador took over a lot of the care and feeding and negotiations with FBO (Foreign Buildings Office), which I would have been less interested in.

Q: You were there from when to when?

SIMONS: I was there from the summer of 1977 to the summer of 1979.

Q: What was your reading when you got there of Ceausescu, and maybe Mrs. Ceausescu, and when you left? Was there a development?

SIMONS: The development was that Ceausescu was becoming more dictatorial, but at the margin. In other words there was no sort of basic change in the system. His wife, we heard, was unpleasant and not very intelligent and had some influence over him, but he was clearly in charge. He was an intelligent, personally very courageous man. He was clever in the sense that he was clearly shifting people around, he kept the leadership in motion by personnel shifts so that no one would be able to consolidate power in one of the regional places to a point where it would threaten him. It was a police regime, in other words an active police that he kept well under control. On the other hand he was not particularly vicious. Romania was still locked into the industrialization policy in terms of economic development with which he consolidated power between 1965 and '68. I mean he represented those within the Romanian Party who advocated Stalinist heavy industrialization as the way forward. It was starting to run out of steam, as happens. We've talked about that previously in the interview. Romania was starting to run out of oil, in other words its oil production now covered only 50% of its consumption, so it had to go elsewhere for the rest. It was going to Iran. Productivity was not great. They were having trouble absorbing technology, as a Stalinist industrial economy does. On the other

hand they were producing their Dacia. I saw in the paper that the last Dacia has just come off the assembly line; it's a version of the Renault.

Q: Dacia is a small car.

SIMONS: Small car, yeah, as in sort of a people's car. But it wasn't really a people's car; it was for the elite, it was a small car for the elites. They loved it, they were proud of it. I had one. I bought one and drove one around for our second car. So they had things going for them. It did not look like a system headed for the kind of cruel dictatorship that it became in the 1980s, or for the economic basket case that it became in the 1980s. It looked like a system that had some options in terms of its foreign economic ties. It looked as if there were people who would buy that stuff, people from whom they could get raw materials to keep going. I thought it was probably condemned to get closer, slowly, to the Soviet Union, but not to the point where it would become a client again like Bulgaria or East Germany. So I thought you could pretty well project versions of the status quo out toward the indefinite future.

Q: How about your ability to talk to people in the Party leadership, the political apparatus?

SIMONS: It was constrained. They didn't talk much about politics. They talked about a lot of things but not about internal political doings. But we had sort of an active intelligence operation there, so you did get insights into political happenings that way. You could talk to people in the intelligentsia who in turn had contacts within the apparatus and get insight that way. I mean they had an anti-Semitic uproar for instance. The editor of one of the journals published something anti-Semitic. I knew the Chief Rabbi very well, because the Jewish community was part of our beat, so to speak, partly because of MFN, and I happened to be interested in it ever since Poland; ever since dealing with Polish anti-Semitism I've been interested in those kinds of phenomena in Eastern Europe. Anyway I was in a position to talk to intellectuals who were horrible enemies of this man (Eugen Barbu), and had always had been, and to figure out what was going to be done with him, if anything. So yeah, we had limited access.

Q: What role did the intelligentsia play?

SIMONS: The intelligentsia did not have the self-consciousness that it had in Slavic countries, nor did it in Hungary for that matter. I think both in Hungary and in Romania it had been much more absorbed, even in pre-Communist days, into the apparatus of authority and rule. It was less excluded from power than it had been in Russia and in Poland. So it had less awareness of itself as the flag bearer of national consciousness and national decency and national values. It was more apt to be co-opted in Romania than elsewhere.

Q: Cultural life?

SIMONS: Cultural life was lively. I'm an historian by training, and I had a history project there as I had in Poland. I used to go to the History Institute every Saturday morning and do research on my project, on agrarian reform after World War I in Romanian historiography, and sort of read up, so that I was aware of the kind of lively historical debates that went on even under the Communists. Part of the regime's ideology was sort of nationalising Romanian history, and I could follow that. Romania had wonderful poets as Poland did. You know Poland has had two Nobel Prize winners now in poetry, and I knew those poets. My Romanian was good enough to sort of appreciate it and get a little bit into that part. I couldn't handle the novels, but they had excellent novelists; Marin Preda was still alive. There was a lively intellectual life. Now where they were really good, I think, was in science and mathematics, the least political fields. They were also suffering a huge drain of people going West and particularly to France.

You had the beginnings of a dissident movement within Romania that we were in touch with. The regime didn't like it, but we still kept doing it, and they cared enough about us so that we were kind of allowed to do that. We were allowed to be in touch with religious dissidents. There was an Evangelical Protestant, there was a Baptist, sort of a lively Baptist church. Anyway, yeah, it's a very Francophile culture. I mean you had good structuralists, but you also had good playwrights, playwrights who were writing things with a lot of political innuendos. That stuff was still going on. You could go to a play by, what's his name, Marin Sorescu, he was from Craiova, he wrote a play on the Ottomans that was sort of a hit. They have very good actors; they have a national tradition of excellent acting. But this was about the Ottomans, and it was a satire on the current regime too, about the toadying and subservience that Romanians think of and are ashamed of as national traits. Anyway, an interesting place.

Q: What were relations with its neighbors, the Soviet Union at that time, and then sort of go around the borders?

SIMONS: With the Soviet Union it had wary relationships. Romanians in private had a bone to pick over Bessarabia, which is the half of Moldavia north of the Pruth River which the Russians had taken in 1812, and then Romania had had it between the wars, and the Soviets then took it back in 1940. It was not something the Romanians talked about in public. I mean it had been censored out of things. That was an issue, but they were quiet about it, they were careful. Of the two other sides, relations with Bulgaria were good. I mean not close, they shared the Danube and had some trade. They met each other. There was a potential issue in the Southern Dobrudja, which is the province that Bulgaria got in 1940. It was then inhabited basically by Turks, and there were few Romanians who cared about that. King Carol II had a castle down there, but basically they'd written that off. The relations with Yugoslavia were very good. They had been good ever since your time there. After '55, '56, the Romanians had been very careful to have good relations with Yugoslavia.

But with Hungary relations were not good, because Transylvania was the bugaboo fear of the Ceausescu regime. Romania has the largest minority in Europe outside the Soviet Union, which is their Hungarian minority of about two million in a country of about 22,

and it's compact in areas of Transylvania. Ceausescu was afraid that they would be used for subversion. The Hungarian regime at that time was unable to contest the Soviet Union, but felt that it had the license to raise Transylvania with the Romanians, and it had an intelligentsia movement of its own worried about the status of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, so they were starting to beat drums. So that was kind of a thorn and irritant. We meanwhile got interested in that. That became an issue, not so much in our relations with Romania as in relations between the Department and the Embassy. Because when the Carter Administration comes in, Hungarian-Americans have an importance in Democratic Party politics, because they're swing votes in certain key industrial constituencies.

Q: That you get in Illinois, Ohio.

SIMONS: And they are better organized than the Romanians. Actually the minorities were about the same size. There were about 300,000 each, but the Hungarians are better educated and organized. So the Democratic Party when they took over the State Department, they set up the first human rights office, which Warren Christopher sponsored as Deputy Secretary. Pat Darien was the first head of it, a Mississippi liberal. At the same time the Department was sort of formalizing the system of mission goals, and they sent us a draft of mission goals that included taking care of the Hungarian minority, and we objected.

One thing I will say about Rudy Aggrey -- this was 1978 because he came in early 1978 -- he knew from minorities. Because he was from a minority himself, and he'd grown up in the days when being a black in the U.S. Foreign Service, you weren't in it for the money. He knew what humiliation was. He had looked out over the Romanian minority scene, and he didn't feel that the Hungarians were actually being persecuted. He thought that if there was a minority that was being persecuted, it was the Gypsies, it was the Roma. They were being discriminated against, humiliated. But the Hungarians, they had some disabilities as a minority, but not what was being claimed. So we objected to making that an official U.S. Government objective in relations with Romania. Now, to deal with the problem, however -- because as DCM I didn't think we would get away with it -- I suddenly started, had the Embassy start to cover the Hungarian minority. Visit their bishops up in Transylvania. There was a Hungarian dissident on trial, and I sent an officer down to stand outside the courtroom door. There was an earthquake before we came in the spring of 1977, and the rumor was going around Hungarian-Americans that all the money for earthquake relief that was coming from America was going to Romanian churches, and none of it was going to Hungarian churches. So I sent officers out with their cameras to take pictures of the Hungarian churches that were being reconstructed with American money. We did all this reporting. So we kind of elevated the profile of the Hungarians without accepting the care and feeding of the Hungarian minority as an official U.S. Government objective.

Q: Well, do you think the Romanian Government understood this; at that time were they being pretty careful about the Hungarians not to?

SIMONS: Yeah, they were. The Romanians in the regime -- and that's also what we reported -- were counting on industrialization and urbanization to eat away at the Hungarian minority. The Hungarian minority in Bucharest for instance, lots of workers, was being assimilated into Romanian society. Bucharest has lots of Hungarians, but you never see them because they have Romanian names and they speak Romanian. That's one of the things that the people in Hungary, interventionists in Hungary, were afraid of: assimilation. That's one of the reasons why they started beating the drum. So that was the main thing.

But then there were also just a kind of nastiness. They had a major Hungarian politician named Kiraly who went dissident. They took him out of his district, a Hungarian district, and shipped him way over to the west of the country. The Western journalists would then sneak in across the Yugoslav border to interview him, so they had to ship him back to another place and put him in charge of a fruit and vegetable co-operative in Tirgu Mures, Marosvasarhely. I don't think he was a very nice guy, but he'd shown his courage on Hungarian rights, against the genocide or whatever. Anyway I went up there, and I can remember sitting for an hour and a half in the local administration listening to these triumphant economic statistics about how well they were doing. Just in order to make a point, on the way out to the door I asked how Kiraly was. Just so they'd know and just so they'd report it. That's sort of the way we dealt with that. That kind of intervention can help keep him alive or whatever, because the Romanians -- you know the regime is brutal, they had workers rise in the Jiu Valley and in Brasov in that time and later, and all the leaders were shipped off and when they came back they were idiots, they looked like they had been eradiated by the secret police – that kind of intervention could save you from vicious treatment.

Q: Were there debates, problems, concerns about the human rights reports, because this was the year when they were first being introduced by the Department?

SIMONS: Not so much, not so much. I mean, maybe because they were in their infancy or let me be frank, because I don't recall, but maybe because Romania had its own version of that in the report to the Congress in connection with renewal of MFN every year. Every year the President had to make a recommendation to the Congress about whether MFN should be renewed for Romania. It would then sit with the Congress for a month, and if it was not rejected MFN would be renewed. That was the way the mechanism worked. In drawing that up -- it was a yearly exercise where you had to make judgments on the Romanian human rights situation, because although the Jackson-Vanik Amendment concerned only emigration, in the nature of things the review process became a Christmas tree for every human rights concern we had, whether it was treatment of Protestants, Baptists, not just emigrants and Jews --every year you had to do a full-scale survey, since every year we recommended renewal you had to justify that. I think maybe in other countries the human rights report was kind of an apple of discord, but in Romania it was the MFN review process.

Q: What about the Israeli Embassy, did that play much of a part?

SIMONS: The Israeli Embassy were good colleagues. We knew the ambassador. Aba Gefen was a Lithuanian Jew who spent the war hiding in the forest, at one point believing that he was the only Jew left in the world. He was a good colleague. The Number Two guy was a native Romanian Jew who used to travel around the country incognito because he spoke native Romanian, and they kind of took care of the Jewish community. They had tensions with Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, because he was not only sending people to Israel but he was also keeping people in Romania. He also had an interest in preserving the community even while seeing it die slowly. The Israelis as a matter of state policy were for aliyah, so there was that kind of a tension that we were sort of aware of. But the Romanians were proud of having that embassy. They gave it protection, all the protection it needed, and valued that Israeli connection.

Q: I would think that the Embassy would be a relatively happy atmosphere. How did you find it?

SIMONS: In Romania?

Q: Yeah, our Embassy.

SIMONS: Oh I think it was. They felt they were doing important work. Romania had that cachet of independence from the Soviet Union that gave it an importance that other East European countries lacked. Even Hungary in those days did not have the importance that Romania did, although the Carter Administration then went and gave back the Hungarian Crown and established a basis for a relationship with Hungary, which was already more liberal in politics and in economics than Romania. I don't want to say there was no struggle over human rights before then, but what happened in those years was that you had to revise the Kissinger-era guidance or policy toward Eastern Europe, the National Security Decision Document or whatever it was. The policy guidance in Kissinger times said we will improve relations with East European countries as a function of their degree of autonomy from the Soviet Union. In other words, domestic liberalities did not count. Under the Carter Administration those were added to the guidance, so that we now had two criteria. You could try to improve relations with a country either on the basis of its independence from the Soviet Union or on the basis of the liberality of its domestic system. So Hungary and Romania and Poland then kind of became neck and neck in terms of the countries that we favored most and put most effort into.

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about?

SIMONS: On Romania?

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I think that is about it.

Q: How about police harassment or that sort of thing?

SIMONS: Not much. I mean it was there. You'd be followed out in the country, a van would pick you up and you sort of traveled around with it behind you. Romanians would tell you about things too; but the police presence was not strong, or not sort of intrusive or ugly as it could be in Poland, for instance, and certainly in the Soviet Union.

Q: Do they get many tourists there, American tourists?

SIMONS: Not a whole lot. It was too remote. They had not developed the industry very much. The tourist industry that they had developed was mass industry on the Black Sea coast. There were great hotels and beaches and mud baths. We got a certain elite tourism because Dr. Ana Aslan had developed a product to inhibit ageing called Gerovital. So you got a certain amount of high-end American tourism, mainly female, coming in for her treatment. There was a certain amount but not much. The mass tourism was mainly from Western Europe.

Q: How about American-Romanians, did they come?

SIMONS: Not much. It's very much a working class community here. Like the Polish community, it didn't like the regime -- the Communist regime -- very much. The regime played games with them supporting different churches -- I think they had competing Romanian Orthodox churches infiltrated by secret police, all that kind of nasty stuff -- but with not much of an impact.

Q: I just was interviewing somebody who was in Bulgaria, I think after your time, but who made the remark that the Bulgarians and Romanians still, I guess even today, only have one bridge over the Danube, and how this is a sign -- truck traffic and all -- it sort of cuts Bulgaria out. Was that at all an issue when you were there?

SIMONS: I don't think so. I think Bulgaria has a lot of truck traffic, but it goes West. It goes through Yugoslavia. Romania is not a factor.

Q: They were there during the boycott, I mean the sanctions, and so then all of a sudden there is just only the one bridge.

SIMONS: But in my time I think they actually had amicable relations. As I say Bulgaria was not a big deal for the Romanians. The two countries are very good friends, sort of culturally and in terms of personality. They were at about the same stage in economic development, which means they didn't have much to trade with each other. The Romanians like Bulgaria's fruits and vegetables. I'm sure they've given something in return, but not a big deal. Now, during the sanctions on Yugoslavia, I can imagine that that would become more of a critical relationship.

Q: We'll stop at this point for lunch. You left there in '79; where did you go?

SIMONS: I went as Political Counselor to London.

LONDON (1979-1981)

Q: Okay, we'll pick that up. Did you have to take British?

SIMONS: No, no.

Q: This is resuming on July 23rd. Tom, you went off to London; how did that come about? This is in '79?

SIMONS: '79. It came about because in the Foreign Service -- I ended up being in it for 35 years -- but every seven years or so I would get kind of a seven-year itch and ask myself why I was working this hard for this much money. There are hard things about the Foreign Service, like raising kids, stuff of that sort. So George Vest, as Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, paid a visit to Romania, and I'd known him since CSCE days. We took him up-country to the old capital of Targoviste, which had wonderful old Romanian Orthodox churches, and had a picnic. I kind of opened up about my discontent and where I was going to go and maybe looking for something else. On my last previous seven-year itch I actually had an appointment at Berkeley, before Governor Reagan started the California education cutbacks. Anyway George didn't say anything, and we went on back. But not long after that Kingman Brewster, our Ambassador in London, fired his Political Counselor, and I got a call offering me the job. I was interested in it and accepted it. So we left. Ambassador Aggrey I think was disappointed, although he got an excellent replacement.

Q: Who replaced you?

SIMONS: Herb Kaiser, who had been in Warsaw just before I got there. A good fellow. They're retired in Palo Alto, so we saw them out there. And we went to London. It turned out to be kind of a mixed bag. London was not as much fun as I had hoped. In some ways it was wonderful. Kingman Brewster was wonderful. Ed Streator was the DCM and Minister. But you know therein kind of lay a tale. I came at a very interesting time. It was Mrs. Thatcher's first year, so the first year of the new Conservative wave or Thatcherism. That was interesting. The Labour Party was wrestling with its ghosts, with its anti-nuclear heritage, so there were things to do. On the other hand, Embassy London draws some of the very best people. Once again I had a section, this time as Political Counselor, that had ten people in it, and every single one of them including the Defense Department civilian later became an ambassador. So you kind of get the pick of people for something like that.

They had the kind of access that we had to the British after all those years of alliance and special relationship. My officers had access up to Assistant Under Secretary. Meanwhile the Ambassador and Ed Streator had been there for a couple of years, they knew everybody, and they skimmed off the ministers. So there was no natural niche for the Political Counselor, for a new Political Counselor, unless I was going to poach on my people, which I didn't want to do and didn't. But as a result I was a little bit bored, I have to say.

I kind of learned the job. I looked for things I could do. After the invasion of Afghanistan, which came at the end of 1979, I sort of took over the Afghanistan portfolio. I did a little bit of Soviet work. My best contacts were at the Deputy Under Secretary level in the Foreign Office, pros like Julian Bullard. People were very kind to me, but I didn't have much to do. Another element was I was used to dealing with adversaries and not with allies, and I found it's a very different kind of work. If you're dealing with adversaries you're looking for the few things that you have in common. If you're dealing with allies you're looking for the few things where you have differences. The British were absolute geniuses at masking those things. I can remember talking to a colleague, an Assistant Under Secretary, Patrick Moberly. It was at a party of the DCM's for a visiting Senate delegation, and I was talking to an American Senator and making this complaint about how hard it is to figure out when we're disagreeing with the British. I called Patrick Moberly over and I said, "Patrick, I was just telling the Senator that it took me six months to figure out when you were disagreeing with me." He looked at me and said, "When was that?" So there was that sort of frustration. Also it was a recession. I mean I had a representation allowance that was adequate, but the dollar was so low that my wife had to drive up to the bases, to our commissaries in East Anglia, in order to supply the kitchen. So we had all sorts of things going. But it was a good period; it was great experience.

Q: You were there from when to when?

SIMONS: '79 to '81. I was there through the Reagan election. Kingman Brewster then left, with my admiration with him. I admired him for the rest of his life.

Q: Why did he fire his Political Counselor?

SIMONS: I think the guy just wasn't performing. He ended up as Consul General in Amsterdam. He wasn't completely on the skids but it could have been personal. I thought Brewster was good. I thought he had a great touch. During the period while I was there we had a strong involvement in the Rhodesia independence process, the Lancaster House conference. My Africa person was right in the center of that.

Q: Who was that?

SIMONS: Gib Lanpher, later Ambassador to Zimbabwe.

Q: I've interviewed Gib.

SIMONS: Yeah. That was one of the high points I think of his life. Kingman was very good at being available to intervene on things that only he could do and very willing to do it. He was selective about it, I mean, but ready to get back to Washington if there was something that was needed: just a very good ambassador. He was maybe a little distant from the Embassy, because he did have a patrician aspect to him. There were 750 Americans, I think, in that Embassy; it was huge. But anyway I remember being in an elevator with Kingman, and he got off at his floor, and as we went on down a woman in

the elevator said, "You know I've been here two years and never seen him. This is the first time I've seen him." A lot of Americans were unhappy because they expected London to be wonderful and to make lots of friends, and they found it was expensive and that the British were Europeans and hard to make friends with. So there was that.

But anyway we did Rhodesia. We watched the Thatcher takeover. I mean putting through the Thatcher program: that recession, standing up to the unions, watching Labour tie itself into knots, dealing with the Afghanistan invasion. And then you got into dealing with issues which were not particularly easy -- questions like the extraterritorial application of U.S. law, where the British were tight, or the Iran hostage situation, whether the British supported us on sanctions. You had Afghanistan, the question of sanctions on the Soviet Union for Afghanistan where the British did not join us: the Olympic boycott, they didn't join us for that. Those were the kind of issues we dealt with.

Q: Had the NATO response to the Soviet SS20 deployments come around that time?

SIMONS: Yeah, in '79. We had the program to place Pershings and cruise missiles in Europe if there were no negotiated reduction or elimination by the end of '83, and that clock was ticking, but it wasn't the sort of huge urgency that it became. The British were afraid of Reagan. I can remember I was the most senior American official left at the Embassy election party when Jimmy Carter conceded. It was full of Brits, including at that point former Prime Minister Ted Heath, who wandered in from just having excoriated Margaret Thatcher in a speech at Wigan, of all places. He was drunk, and I was a little drunk too at that point, it was like two in the morning. Ted Heath started yelling about how America has gone fascist, and he wouldn't stop. I had to call in a friend of mine, Nicholas Lord Bethell, who had been a junior minister of Ted Heath's and was also an East European type like me, to kind of calm Ted and get him out and get him home. So the British were really quite worried. One of the jobs of being Political Counselor is also to give talks and speeches, and for the British American politics are almost like a second skin. They know our politics extremely well and follow them. So my job in 1980 was to explain to these very aware audiences how a country of 240 million talented people could produce two such candidates. Then after the election, my job was to explain to them how it's not going to be so bad. So I did that.

Q: Were you picking up, were you and your officers picking up what Thatcherism meant? I was wondering sort of what the attitude to begin with was. I never served in the United Kingdom, but for a long time I had the feeling that unless something is done about these unions, not just the miners but the whole union thing, which is the English disease, they're not going to go anywhere.

SIMONS: I think even though it was a Democratic Administration -- Kingman Brewster was Carter's politically appointed Ambassador -- we were all sympathetic, felt that the country was in bad shape and needed some kind of shock therapy. Now whether it was the right shock therapy it was hard to tell. I think we all understood the economic program, getting inflation under control. I think we understood the question of getting a wider opening for entrepreneurship in the economy, which was part of the program. I

think we understood all of that. I think we understood the problem of the unions. I can remember being at a Labour Party Conference because we were following the nuclear issue, and they were going to have a major vote on it. The head of the woodworkers' union who had four million votes in his pocket, Labour Party votes, just went home. He wasn't there. So it lost. It was just political incompetence. I mean you cannot imagine an Ernest Bevin allowing that kind of thing to happen under old Labour. So the Labour Party was no bargain. I think we understood the problems. I think however we were kind of pessimistic, or I was pessimistic about it, because I must say that I was very struck by class, by the importance of the class factor in British life and British politics, and I found it distasteful, it caused a lot of polarization. People really find it hard to talk to each to other, and there's a lot of nastiness. I mean nastiness: we have nastiness in our life too, but it's usually on an ethnic basis.

Q: The British seem to have a capacity trained over generations to put down people, and you can't put down an American particularly because where are you going to put them down to?

SIMONS: I found that I was constantly being cross-roughed. Conservatives, Tory personalities, thought that they liked Americans because we represented free enterprise and vigorous individualism and anti-Communism, but they found that personally they didn't much like Americans because Americans were too fluid in class terms. I mean they were too hard to identify. Labour people thought they disliked us because we were imperialist and represented capitalism and rugged individualism, but they found that actually they liked us personally because we took them outside their class system. I found this all very disconcerting through my whole time there. But in terms of political analysis it made it difficult to be optimistic, because we watched the struggles of the Liberal Party and then of the new Social Democratic Party, which was born during my time there. We had a lot of time for the new Social Democrats, Shirley Williams and her friends. But it was hard to be optimistic that they wouldn't be ground between the millstones of class, because it didn't seem that there was a large enough metro-land, as they called it, a new mobile middle class that can support a liberal alternative that was not bound to the world of class. So by the time I left, it was hard to predict that Mrs. Thatcher's experiment, because that's what it was, would succeed. I mean to predict that the reforms, the Thatcher revolution, would call forth in fact -- as I think has happened -- a middle class that doesn't necessarily vote Conservative. It's perfectly capable of voting Labour, so there's now much more of a situation like our situation where both our parties are actually huge federations, cross-class federations. I think that's happening to them, I think it's healthy, but we couldn't see that in our time.

Q: Were you picking up attitudes about Mrs. Thatcher as a person, as a leader?

SIMONS: Well, yeah, Labour mainly hated her as a greengrocer's daughter. The harshest of the Victorian middle-middle class.

Q: Born above the shop.

SIMONS: Yeah, which is the toughest. The Tories also had these One-Nation Tories, people like Ian Gilmore. What they call the Wets. So we dealt with them. They had a very jaundiced attitude toward her. First I think perhaps on a class basis of their own, because a lot of them were better born than she was, but then ideologically because they didn't like the pushing. She was a pusher as a politician. That's how she mobilized. Then you had a group very much like our neo-cons, Reagan Democrats, who were ideologically committed people who believed in controlling the money supply and forcing down inflation and deregulating. She even had her own philosopher of East European Jewish origin with whom she used to get in and argue. Kind of an émigré intellectual -- well Milton Friedman's American-born, so I don't know. Anyway, attitudes towards her ran the spectrum. I think there was always kind of grudging respect because she was a tough lady and a clear thinker and also an excellent tactician. So I think she had skills that were admired within the system even by people who hated her.

Q: Were you out on the speaking circuit a lot during the Soviet Afghan invasion?

SIMONS: Not so much. I chose really to work with the Foreign Office. One of the great positives of Britain was dealing with really top-notch diplomats, the British professional cadre. I dealt at close range with one of the great foreign services, and I was impressed and liked them. Some of my best friends I'd known from postings overseas, Christopher Mallaby from Moscow, for instance, or Andrew Burns from Bucharest. So I kind of dealt with them on Afghanistan. It wasn't out on the streets.

Q: How did your colleagues in the British Foreign Service respond to the Afghan thing? Did they see it the same way we did, or did they think we were overreacting?

SIMONS: I don't think so. I think they saw it pretty much the way we did. They did see it as a Soviet blunder. They thought it was a mistake. I don't think they agreed with us on the interpretation that the Soviets were driving towards the Persian Gulf. I thought they believed, as I believe to this day -- in fact I got there dealing with people like Malcolm Macintosh who was a bigwig on the Joint Intelligence Committee at that time, and he was the one who first pointed out to me that the format of the invasion was exactly the format of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia: the Special Forces troops take the airport, capture the leadership, and carry it off to Moscow where you impose a new subordination on the leaders. Except that in the Afghan case Hafizullah Amin didn't play that game, in fact he was protected by fanatical soldiers who fought to the death, so the Soviets were then left holding the bag and had to bring Babrak Karmal back from Moscow. I think the British were clearer-eyed, more clear-eyed about the motives, but they still thought that it was dangerous and a mistake. So I think, the British always take us with a certain grain of salt. They find that we are always a little exaggerated. But they're so used to dealing with us that I don't think it bothers them.

Q: Did you find one of the things about being in London and being in a relatively high position, did you find you were having to service an awful lot of visitors back and forth?

SIMONS: Yeah, we did. But it is the classic ambiguity: you also welcomed the visitors because you'd go with them to see important people, so that helps too. It was a burden, much more for instance than in Moscow, because everybody wants to come to London and not that many people want to come to Moscow. It was a burden on the Embassy, but the Embassy also was equipped to deal it. It had a whole travel and visitor's management bureau.

Q: Was Joan Auten there?

SIMONS: Joan Auten?

Q: Yeah, I've heard her name again and again.

SIMONS: She was there, and she was a legend. She started off as a secretary during the War in the American Embassy. She told me she used to take dictation from "Whispering John" Winant, walking up and down the room. It's almost inconceivable with the security we have today, but he would be dictating confidential cables to a British subject. But Joan was a great personality and a friend of mine. She was the one who facilitated one of the other positives about London for me, which was getting to know Henry Kissinger. Henry Kissinger came regularly through London; Kingman Brewster thought he was a scoundrel and would not see him; Ed Streator, who I don't think did think he was a scoundrel but was loyal to or careful with his chief, also would not see him; so I was the one who was ticked off to go to the airport and bring Henry in. I loved it because I could talk to him. He was interested -- I actually suggested to him some kind of role for instance with regard to South Africa, some kind of mediator role – and he was interested but he never did it. But I had long conversations with Henry Kissinger. It was an education for me, and I was an admirer of Henry Kissinger. In many ways I still am. But that was the first time I'd had that kind of contact. I can remember going with him and Mrs. Kissinger, Nancy, and Stavros Niarchos, who knew them from the shipping business...

Q: Oh yes, one of the ship types. He was Onassis's rival.

SIMONS: …out to Luton where Niarchos had his plane, and he was going to ferry the Kissingers around somewhere. We were sitting, the four of us were sitting there waiting for the plane to warm up, and Niarchos looked over and he said, "Who's your ambassador?" I said, "Oh, Kingman Brewster." "Never heard of him." Kissinger at that point gave me a look that was tantamount to a wink. Great moments in diplomacy.

Q: You were there when the Reagan Administration came in?

SIMONS: It came in and we got a new Ambassador. We got John Jeffrey Lewis, who was the Johnson's Wax heir: a venture capitalist, as he introduced himself. It was hard to figure out why he was there, because he knew very little about foreign affairs.

Q: And he wasn't very interesting.

SIMONS: And not very interesting. He did like the lords and ladies, which is an added part of British life that is appealing to some. We later learned that the reason he was there was because they were friends of the Walter Annenbergs. Mrs. Lewis, who is a charming lady, was a friend of Mrs. Walter Annenberg, a predecessor who had redone Winfield House, the official residence -- the old Barbara Hutton estate -- and had put 18th-century Chinese wallpaper on the walls. And Mrs. Annenberg wanted someone in the house who would maintain it as it deserved to be maintained, and that had something to do with his appointment to London. Anyway he was there. He was a very modest man. I can remember briefing him on nuclear issues in Europe, the British nuclear force was being refurbished at that point with our help, and I pointed out to him that one reason it was important was because the Germans as a non-nuclear country did not want to be left alone to defend their security with France. I remember Ambassador Lewis looked at me and he said, "Tom, I didn't know that Germany was non-nuclear." But he was a modest man, I mean he was not belligerently ignorant. He was humbly ignorant and willing to learn, but as you say not extremely interesting.

Q: I think he was either a classmate of mine at college or one class before or behind, but not a name I've ever heard of.

SIMONS: He tripped up later during the Falklands War.

Q: Yeah, well, during the Falklands War, I mean okay, one of these legends of the Foreign Service that he wasn't at post and he was fired.

SIMONS: I think he actually called asking whether his presence was wanted and was told no. I was sorry for that, because I thought he was a decent man. He was out of his depth, but still on the other hand a place like London, one of the problems with London is, which my wife quoted when I curtailed -- I left early, I had a four-year assignment and left after two years -- but as I once said to her, "If I really screw up what's the most harm I can do to Anglo-American relations?" It was such a solid relationship.

Q: I interviewed Ed McCraw whom I had known when I was Consul General in Naples, and he was saying it wasn't really that interesting or important a job. Sometimes you feel like you're a glorified hotel-keeper or something like that.

SOVIET AFFAIRS IN WASHINGTON (1981-1985)

SIMONS: Well, the way I left was that in the spring of 1981, toward the end of my second year, there came through London Lawrence Eagleburger who was the outgoing Ambassador to Belgrade and had been Kissinger's special assistant or Executive Secretary. But as a career Foreign Service Officer the Carter people had sent him to Yugoslavia where he was a brilliant ambassador and where I had met him. When he got fogged out of Belgrade, coming back to Belgrade, he would have to fly to Bucharest and I as DCM would meet him at the airport and got to know him and fell in love with him. I mean I was devoted to Eagleburger. Anyway he came back through London with his

outgoing DCM, Jack Scanlan, who was also coming back. Larry was going to be Assistant Secretary, and Jack was going to be his Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, the one responsible for the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia. Jack was a Polish hand, he'd been our Consul in Poznan when I'd been in Warsaw, and we knew each other from there and liked each other. We're both from Minnesota. Anyway they wanted to fire the Director for Soviet Affairs because he was too attached to the old détente kind of policy.

Q: Who was that?

SIMONS: Bob German his name was, Robert German. He retired to Texas. He was not fired, and on the other hand he had an ill mother in Texas, so being moved out at that point was not entirely the explanation for that. What happened to him afterwards, it was heart treatment. But it was felt that he was just too attached to the previous policy, he was not going to be ready for a tightening up vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, they needed somebody new, so they offered it to me. I remember we were at a London restaurant and Larry said, "What do you do here? What are you doing here?" I said, "Well, you know, I do all these things and I do this and I do that." He looked at me and he said, "Aw, come on." So I packed up and came back to Washington that summer of 1981, just as the "Reagan Cold War" got underway, to take over the State Department's largest bilateral desk, 23 people I think we had, and we had an exciting time.

I thought that my job was going to be to kind of try and keep as much of the structure of the U.S.-Soviet relationship intact as could be sensibly done as we went into this tougher mode which was going to break crockery and things were going to be torn apart. But I thought that the ideological point, the anti-Soviet cutting edge, would kind of wear itself out in probably a year, at which point you would start to refill it with maybe more sensible content, but that it was important to keep the structure going. As it turned out it took three years because of the way things developed. But anyway it was an exciting job.

I worked for Eagleburger and first for Jack Scanlan and then when Eagleburger went upstairs -- how was it? it was Eagleburger for about a year and then he went up to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs, P, and Jack Scanlan went out to Yugoslavia. Anyway Jack was replaced by Mark Palmer, R. Mark Palmer who was a Soviet hand, also about my age. He came into the Foreign Service in '61, straight out of college. He also had India experience, his wife was Indian by origin. It was a wonderful team in EUR. But then Eagleburger was replaced by Richard Burt, who was a New York Times journalist who had been very much involved in the struggle within the Carter Administration over arms control with the Soviet Union, who had come to PM, and then when Eagleburger went upstairs he moved over to EUR, so Richard Burt was Assistant Secretary from '83 to '85.

Q: So you did this from when to when?

SIMONS: I did it from '81 to '85, which means that I hold the record for tenure in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs; it will never be surpassed. Nobody had ever stayed that

long and it will never be surpassed because there is no more Soviet Union. So it's a historical record that will stand.

Q: When you took it over was the Soviet desk prime? It was Ronald Reagan, and how long had he been in?

SIMONS: Six months.

Q: So we were seeing a man who served his political career as being anti-Communist, not very -- I mean to the best of our knowledge at that time -- not very knowledgeable about the Soviet Union, just really anti-Soviet.

SIMONS: Actually, well, that's grossly true. He was more anti-Communist. He had learned about Communism from dealing with the Communists in union negotiations.

Q: Sure, when he was in the Screen Actors' Guild.

SIMONS: In the film industry, that's right, the Screen Actors' Guild, and he thought they were slime and scoundrels, and I think they probably were at that point. So that was his kind of feeling about socialism. Then he picked up a whole bunch of sort of slogans, sort of summary judgments on the Soviet Union. I was told, I never saw it, but told by people in a position to know that he used to keep in a desk drawer a list of the Ten Commandments of Nikolai Lenin. Of course Lenin's name was Vladimir, but that didn't prevent Reagan from having this Ten Commandments of Nikolai Lenin and taking it out from time to time. I was also told that he had a little reminder in there saying "Wear a brown suit when you are selling to Jews." I've never figured out what relevance that had to anything under the sun. Reagan was a man who thought in symbolic terms, just as most of us university-educated people think in prose, sort of logically, one sentence after another. Reagan tended to think in parallels, but it was still thinking. I think that threw a lot of people off, because they thought he was dumb when he was just speaking differently from what they were.

He was also being advised by people -- it took me about a year to figure out that the people who were advising Reagan about the Soviet Union were either themselves or in terms of family background, people who had come to the United States from a ruined Europe where the West had been unable to stand up to totalitarianism. Europe had destroyed itself in a holocaust, and most particularly you had The Holocaust, because many of these people were Jewish. They knew a lot about the Soviet Union. They had come to this country as young people. Of course Kissinger fits that pattern also, but I'm speaking of Richard Perle, Eddie Luttwak, who was not in the Administration. Richard Perle's background was Romanian Jewish. Paul Wolfowitz is the son of a Polish rabbi. These are all people who knew a lot about the Soviet Union, but who had come to the United States or their parents had as to a haven of ordered democracy, in other words a combination of strength and freedom. Uniquely equipped to stand up to whatever European disease was flourishing at the moment. They felt that something awful had happened in the 1960s. That some spring had snapped and that the United States had

weakened itself or been weakened and it was in danger of not being able to stand up to the Soviet threat, and they had to help make this right. So they knew a lot about the Soviet Union, but they were pessimistic, they were bearish on America.

Ronald Reagan, I figured out after a year, and the people around him, Bill Clark who was deputy to Haig and then went over to be National Security Advisor, I think even Richard Allen before he was kicked out, they're from California and they are bullish on America. They felt, I think, that if you could get America right then America could pretty easily handle whatever threat the Soviet Union was. So they had set out -- their strategy, the strategy of all of them, I mean of the Administration -- was really to put the Soviet relationship on ice while you re-established American defenses, re-established the American economy and re-established relations with Allies that had been badly tattered under Carter, especially by the Afghan episode where Carter tried to lead but not many people followed. So I think that was the strategy.

It didn't mean we couldn't deal with the Soviet Union, but it did mean we had to deal with the Soviet Union from a position of strength. I didn't find that crazy. The Russians were I thought a status quo power. They were entering their own late, Lower Empire period, pulling and hauling because Brezhnev was getting weaker and weaker. Even at the Vienna Summit in 1979, I think it was '79, under Carter, he had been known to American advance people as R2D2 -- from Star Wars, the little robot from Star Wars - because everything had to be so meticulously scripted because of his physical and mental shape. So I thought the Soviet Union was not in good shape and would probably take this American restoration, and that an American restoration was not a bad thing.

Now the pessimists thought we were driving the world towards another nuclear war, and you had a revival of the anti-nuclear movement such as hadn't been seen on that scale for 10 or 20 years.

Q: Well you know, Foreign Service officers, American diplomats, are bred to make better relations and to do something. I think a lot of Europeans, diplomats, are used to sitting there and watching things bubble on, but we are essentially activists. Here you are in this major relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, and essentially what was happening was neither side was ready or equipped to do much about it. What were you doing? First place, did you understand what the situation was and….

SIMONS: I didn't understand what I just told you for about a year, because as I said earlier, I thought the job was to keep as much of the structure intact as possible until the ideology kind of wore itself out, and I thought that would probably take about a year. That isn't the way it turned out. What happened was that the Administration fought itself to a standstill under Alexander Haig as Secretary of State. He was there for about a year and a half, until June 1982. I had a lot of admiration for him too, because he threw himself in front of tanks in the interest of keeping a sensible diplomacy, because of the ideology, the anti-Communist ideology and its partner which is an anti-European strand because "the Europeans are weaklings," always trying to push us into détente and better relations, where we give up things that are essential to American national interests. So

anti-Communist, anti-Soviet elements were also anti-European. Richard Perle had always been that way. It makes you unilateralist. Well, Al Haig had been Supreme Commander in NATO. There it didn't feel that way; there you're more impressed with the feeling that we're dealing from a weak hand and you need Allies. You believed in Allies.

Q: Of course, his NATO experience and his NSC experience.

SIMONS: Right. So you were pushing for activism, the State Department was. It is absolutely true what you said. Eagleburger was somewhat like that. Mark Palmer was certainly like that. Mark was up, I think he was up in P at that point doing political work, but anyway I can remember sending a memo at a certain point, still early, 1981, that first year before Reagan's November speech with the zero option for intermediate-range missiles saying, "The Soviets have learned their lesson. We have taught the Soviets the lesson, now is the time to get back to negotiations."

Q: Those guys weren't going to do that.

SIMONS: It was too soon for that. At first I thought it was just kind of natural given their ideology and the bloody-mindedness. But I sort of came to realize that the Administration and the President, their actual priorities that summer were the tax cut and getting the defense buildup underway. I mean expanding the defense budget. That had been true from the beginning. I remembered those speeches that I used to have to give in London about why Ronald Reagan wasn't going to do so bad. What I said was, "He has promised three things. He has promised deep tax cuts, he's promised massive expansion of the defense budget and he's promised a balanced budget. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm telling you he cannot have all three. I don't know which one he is not going to have. But I know he can't have all three, so calm down if you're worried about things."

It was the balanced budget that went, of course, but it took time, it took time. Anyway I kind of figured out that as far as the President was concerned it was "cure America first and then you'll see." I thought that was okay. I think it is true, however, that had the State Department been given its head under Al Haig it would have pushed to get into negotiations, because that's just what the State Department does. So I think the gridlock in a way was not unhealthy, because the people who are afraid of the mindless urge to negotiate of the State Department were an authentic force in American politics. Not just in the Republican Party, in American politics. Remember Paul Nitze, he's a Democrat, was always a Democrat. But he was part of the Committee on the Present Danger, which I see has now been revived with Mark Palmer in it for the war on terrorism. It's in the paper this week, July 2004 as we are now. Anyway it took a while for me to realize what was going on, but I was never uncomfortable with the toughening up, because I always thought that the Soviets should be treated like adults and if they were doing things that were very damaging to our relationship as they were in the Third World, that we ought to sort of punch them in the nose. Punching them in the nose is not necessarily anti-Soviet. It also could help a relationship that was useful to them. I never felt anti-Soviet in supporting tougher policy or even suggesting tougher policy.

Q: Did you get any feel for the tension between the White House and Al Haig?

SIMONS: I didn't. As the military says, that was above my pay grade. I didn't understand the depth of resentment of Haig for pounding up those stairs, I think claiming to play the President during the assassination attempt on the President in March of 1981. I didn't understand the degree of mistrust, the lack of trust and confidence between them and Al Haig. I remember when Bill Clark went over to replace Richard Allen after Allen had resigned over the Japanese watch. Al Haig…

Q: It was a Korean watch.

SIMONS: Was it a Korean watch? But Haig's reaction was "I'm so happy because now I will have a true friend close to the President." It just didn't sound right, but I didn't know how bad it was. I was in the room with him in New York. It was during the UN session when he was informed that the decision had been taken to torpedo the European gas pipeline between the Soviet Union and Western Europe, which was the proximate cause of his resignation, and he resigned I think that night or the next day. But that was a little beyond where we are.

Q: Let me stop. This is Tape 5, Side 1, with Tom Simons.

Tom, we're in the middle of the time from '81-'85 when you are in charge of Soviet affairs in the European bureau. Do you want to put here what subjects you want to cover when we next get together?

SIMONS: I think I've set the scene in terms of the politics and the personnel and the ideological contention. But the truth is we're really at the beginning of it in the summer of 1981. What I would like to do next time is to do a chronology of how the relationship developed. We're not even at Haig's resignation yet. We've talked about Haig, but I would like to start in '81: how we got to the INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) Zero Option proposal, how we then got to the START 50-percent reduction proposal next year, Haig's resignation, Shultz, the gas pipeline controversy, Shultz's takeover, his very careful consolidation of his position and where we went from there; because it was not straightforward. I'd like to take it through 1985, which was my tenure, my four-year tenure as head of SOV (Office of Soviet Union Affairs).

Q: All right, at this end I would like to ask (while you were doing that) also how well and how much did you use CIA and other intelligence? -- I mean what sort of role did that play -- and about INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research). I'm just a little bit concerned about the intelligence side for an officer in charge of a relationship; we've discussed that.

SIMONS: Well, you read a lot of intelligence. I mean I was looking around, I came into the job looking around at the bureaucratic landscape in terms of what it meant for how to do Soviet-U.S. relations. It was very clear that the classic détente balance was no longer working. That's the balance whereby you had the Joint Chiefs of Staff on one point as

conservatives, ACDA (the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) at the other point as activists for détente and arms control, and the essential bargains being worked out between the State Department and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. So there were two guys in the middle, two institutions in the middle. That had been broken under Reagan.

Under Reagan you had the Office of the Secretary of Defense, very conservative, with Richard Perle and Caspar Weinberger dominating that. ACDA under Ken Edelman was also very conservative and against arms control. The State Department was as usual wanting to negotiate, and actually the uniformed military were supporters of stability and preserving the structures and negotiations. So now the alliance is between the State Department and the uniformed military, on the one hand, and the Defense Department civilians and the ostensible arms controllers on the other. But there was no adjudicator; there was no natural adjudicator because President Reagan would not adjudicate between these warring factions.

So I would look around for, you know, who's likely to be allies. The uniformed military for sure. Then I thought maybe the business community could be counted on to support détente because they're always starry-eyed about these huge markets in the Communist East. But on the other hand it's very cautious: that's where I learned -- and it's apparent since then -- that they are really a pretty weak sister when it comes to political infighting on stuff of this sort. So you couldn't count on them much. You had an intellectual community that was sort of appalled by the stiffening of our relations, and some of them, because the Jewish element was still…

Q: Paul Nitze and others.

SIMONS: Paul was not Jewish, but many neo-cons were, and the neo-cons were toughies. But even liberal Jews were coming back into the fold, because they had to have somebody in government to talk to about Soviet Jewry. I mean even if they found it rather distasteful -- and Shultz later sort of played on that -- there was nowhere else to go. As far as intelligence was concerned, CIA was very much in the center; we were very much on the same wavelength. When we came to writing Richard Pipes' NSDD-75 or whatever it was, the basic document on U.S.-Soviet policy, I had them do the first draft of the analysis, and had my office do the first draft of the recommendations, and then we sort of fought from there.

DIA was off the wall, because they were under the thumb of a political appointee, a woman named Wynfred Joshua, who was a flamethrower and a fire-eater of the conservative persuasion, and so very difficult to deal with. INR was solid and hardworking, I knew all the analyses, they were in our meetings, and we were just very close to them and on the same wavelength. Again, not exaggerating was important, because the Soviets were screaming bloody murder, screaming you are tearing the world apart, it's a new Cold War. All of us took that for the kind of rhetoric that it really was, because the truth was that neither side was in an offensive mode. In other words, neither

side was expansive and both sides felt that they were on defense rather than offence. That was a kind of security that you weren't going to get into a conflict.

Q: OK, when we pick this up, whenever we pick this up, let's go back to the very beginning of this tape just to pick up…

SIMONS: We'll read it and we can start then.

Q: Then we can start then.

Q: Well, after quite a hiatus, today is the 26th of July 2007. Tom, before we leave the intelligence side, I just want to say were we -- we were then less than a decade away – were we sensing the collapse of the Soviet Union? During your time there, strictly on the intelligence side, was there anything coming out of there, anybody -- not just the intelligence but the other people – saying, "You know, these guys don't have much longer to go." Or were we sort of all thinking the same thing, will it last forever?

SIMONS: Well, yeah, I think we were aware of their weaknesses. I mean there was no lack of reporting on the running down of the economy, the lack of ideological fire, maybe shifting over to lack of legitimacy. But the Soviet Union was a big given; I mean it was out there, it was powerful. So I don't think that there was any sense, certainly not that I can remember, that it was headed for collapse.

At that point you get into questions about the post-hoc theorizing: about how Ronald Reagan's intention was to spend them into the ground, and how he was ultimately successful. That was not the feeling we had at the time, including the feeling of doing it on purpose. Now, this was an Administration that did not like the Soviets, that wanted to push back -- I mean which felt that the Soviets were sort of on a roll, especially in the Third World but also in terms of armaments, and that wanted to push back, that wanted to probe weaknesses. But I don't think it acted on the assumption that we were going to push them over the brink into the historic slough of despond, I just didn't get that.

Q: OK, well, then you mentioned you'd like to really start about '81 when you started. Do you want to go through some of the period much more minutely?

SIMONS: Well the period…I mean in '81 it was still an Administration that had the bit between its teeth, I mean it was new. That was the summer when they got the tax cuts through, that was the big battle and the big triumph. I think they felt good about that, and they felt it had a lot to set right. Certainly in dealing with the Soviet Union, where Carter had been sort of weak and compromising, and they were really going to be robust and sturdy. There was not a whole lot of incentive to do things. I think that the Administration's main priorities -- and this became clearer and clearer -- were domestic: in other words get the economy right, do some rearmament and restore America's confidence, and then we'll see about the Soviet Union. So there was not a whole lot of incentive to negotiate.

We had a commitment to explore the possibilities for negotiating something on the immediate-range missiles in Europe, INF.

Q: This is the SS-20 crisis?

SIMONS: The SS-20 crisis and our response in the form of Pershings and the GLCMs (Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles, Glickums). There was a deadline in the policy: if we didn't succeed by 1983 in negotiating a satisfactory solution, we would then deploy. Our Allies had agreed to that, and Germany and the Netherlands and I think Italy at least agreed to deploy these missiles on their soil, but they were nervous, they were antsy.

Q: And Italy too.

SIMONS: And Italy as well. But they were antsy, and so we recognized that that was a problem, and that we needed to have a minimum negotiating track in order to keep them on board. It was not a negotiating track that we were enamored of in its own right; we saw it mainly as a way of keeping the Europeans on board.

With the Soviets therefore, they are a great power, you want to maintain a relationship with them, you wanted to avoid being accused of wanting to tear everything down, which the Soviets were busy saying. Their approach was that everything that had happened in the 1970s was good, even though not all the agreements made were good, and the U.S. was tearing everything down. This I think was something they believed, and of course it was also something that worked with the Europeans in terms of the political battle over INF.

So the first issue we had was what to do about the traditional annual meeting at the UN General Assembly with Gromyko, which was coming up in September. I came on board I think around the first of August. We were immediately engaged in preparations for that. My wonderful bosses were Mark Palmer, the deputy for policy for Larry Eagleburger, who is the Assistant Secretary for Europe who had brought me back from London early, and Jack Scanlan, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. So we sort of worked as a team preparing that. Eagleburger enjoyed Haig's confidence. Haig, I think, liked the idea of dealing with the Soviets. He had a Henry Kissingerian sort of approach to these things, and that was one of the things that got him in trouble, because he also tended to try to use Kissingerian language, which is unnatural to him. He was much more direct and to the point and convincing when he was talking like a golf club locker room, but when he ran up the stairs to take charge after the assassination attempt he did his famous Haig speech in an effort to emulate Kissinger. But he actually had very sound instincts and a good sense of specifics.

When we were preparing for the meeting with Gromyko, it became clear that the problem he saw was the rap on the Carter administration, which the rest of the new Administration shared, of too much emphasis on arms control.

This was that we had an arms-control-dominated relationship, which needed to be corrected. That we needed to add things to it so that it wouldn't be so arms-control-dominated, and what we wanted to add was what were then called geopolitical issues, the Soviet role in the Third World, the Cubans in Africa, the war that was going on in Afghanistan, what we saw as interference in these civil wars and the insurgencies in Central America. In other words the idea was that they were acting and pushing all over the world, so you set up a meeting where the message was basically bi-polar, I mean it was like a two-part agenda: it was arms control where they wanted to talk and where really you're not being very cooperative, and what we want to talk about is these geo-political issues, which they began by saying basically had no place on our agenda at all.

Q: Well, arms control -- I've talked to many people who've dealt with arms control over the years -- and it seems like almost an exercise in futility. I mean it was nice to be able to talk; it's better to jaw, jaw, jaw than to war, war, war; but nothing was happening.

SIMONS: Well, you had agreements that were enforced. I mean you had the SALT I Interim Agreement that was enforced, which set limits. You had SALT II, which had been signed in 1979, which Carter had pulled from the Senate with the Afghanistan invasion, but we were observing the limitations of SALT II. So it provided a framework for the strategic competition, which had some usefulness. I mean certainly one of reasons that our uniformed military was supportive there was that otherwise there was unpredictability; I mean things could go haywire.

Also, Stuart, I have to say I consider -- not because I agree with it but as an observation – that arms control had fundamental political importance, because you had elites in the two countries, with ideologies that basically didn't overlap, that were hostile and confrontational -- we just didn't agree with each other on what made the world tick and what should make the world tick – and the one major interest that the elites in the two countries shared was avoiding nuclear war. Both of them had come to agree through the Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis that it was in the interest of each country to do as many sensible things as you could to avoid nuclear war.

Q: But wasn't the SS-20 -- I mean at that time, not how we look at it today but at that time -- wasn't the SS-20, you know, a real provocation?

SIMONS: Yeah and I think -- I mean I haven't followed the record closely, but I recall having seen things where the Soviets admitted a bit later that they had made a mistake in deploying the SS20s. I mean they had just gone ahead, and it seemed like the next thing to do, without having made the political judgments, thought about the effect that it was going to have. A little bit like our trying to deploy these missiles and radars in Poland and Czechoslovakia now. I think that started as a military judgment without much political consideration or thought given to political consequences.

Once it was there, however, and here try thinking yourself back to the end of the'70's, what it was like around 1980. We had lost in Vietnam and the Soviets were rolling up the Third World; we had stagflation that we couldn't get away from. We had a President who

had gone up on a mountain and come down and told Americans they were suffering from a profound spiritual malaise and there wasn't anything that the President could do about it. It was this kind of world, and the Europeans were very antsy about it. Carter had called them to a NATO summit that summer, and they refused to come.

So what the Europeans thought was important to the new Administration. All administrations when there is a change of party start by correcting the sins and weaknesses of the previous one, and one of the things that the Republicans tied Carter with was being tough on the Allies, favoring your enemies and not your Allies. So this European angle was important to the Administration, and I think actually key. What the Europeans were interested in was bona fide arms control, and that is what created the pressure for the INF zero option, which was put forward in a speech in October. We had our meeting with Gromyko, that sort of two-part meeting, with no results and the relationship goes on. But the pressure kept up, mainly from the Europeans and mainly in relation to INF, the intermediate-range nuclear missiles; the SS-20 crisis as you call it continued to build, and in order to head that off the President came forward on the 18th of October with the zero option. Everybody kind of agreed with it, and it became a pattern of the Reagan Administration to put forward these bold arms control proposals. Half of the people in the Administration were willing to support it because they thought the Soviets would never accept it and it would freeze the relationship forever. The other half, of which I was kind of one, said, "Well, maybe not for now but at least it's a step, you keep a process going an arms control between the superpowers, and let's see what comes out of it."

Then you had the next crisis in the relationship, although it was not good, the declaration of Polish martial law, which was the 13th of December.

Q: Could you explain what was that?

SIMONS: Polish martial law. You had a crisis in Poland beginning in 1976, a crisis with a weak Party in power, a Party that was trying half-liberalization. You had already had a crisis in 1971 where the Polish leadership had gone to Moscow and said, "Help me," and the Soviets had said, "It's your problem;" so there was that precedent. You had a crisis beginning of 1979, a political crisis that had been cooking since '76, and that led now to the rise of this huge free trade union movement, Solidarity. A quarter of the Communist Party were members of it. They had 8-10 million people, and in 1980 there was a very severe threat of Soviet intervention, which the almost lame-duck Carter White House I think actually turned back by being very, very stiff with the Soviets about what would happen. In 1981 the crisis continued all through the year: Solidarity remaining powerful, the government getting more desperate under Jaruzelski, a military president, a general as president and a Party First Secretary at the same time. The Soviets were uncertain what to do, Brezhnev was very ill, in other words a very old, decrepit Soviet leadership, as it turned out later, but we also suspected at the time not anxious to intervene but to play it careful. Meanwhile Solidarity was getting crazy, in other words losing control of some of its more radical elements as the year went on, and then on December 13 martial law was

declared and almost 10,000 people arrested. I mean in the Solidarity movement, almost 10,000, and the question was what to do about it.

Well, at that point it was very, very interesting, because you know Carter had kind of done these sanctions for Afghanistan where he had gone ahead and done things, he had confirmed grains sales to the Soviets but had also boycotted the Moscow Olympics, and some Europeans hadn't. The Europeans had not really wanted to follow, and it was very messy. And the Reagan people – certainly, you know, they were attached to not doing what Carter had done with regard to Europe – they were very anxious to be on board with the Europeans and to have a united Western response to Polish martial law, and Haig was key to that. Eagleburger sent me -- even though I didn't have a whole lot of operational role -- to the special NATO meeting in January that hammered out the NATO response. The issue was that we wanted blanket sanctions or various blanket sanctions not only on the Poles but also on the Soviet sponsors of this evil act. The Europeans were willing to put in some "sanctions," but they didn't want to lose the whole fruit of the development of relations between Eastern and Western Europe in the 1970s. Especially the Germans: Haig was engaged with Genscher for…this was very clear…

Q: Genscher was the West German Foreign Minister.

SIMONS: The West German Foreign Minister at the time. The specific issue was: if we put on sanctions, should they be reversible if the conditions that we accompanied them with were fulfilled? In other words not sanctions that would go on forever and ever, but sanctions which would be lifted at some point if the three things NATO said they wanted from the Polish regime were accomplished: freeing all political prisoners, a dialogue with the Church, I think was in there -- I'm not exactly clear -- and also a dialogue with free political forces, I think including Solidarity. I think Solidarity was mentioned but I'm not sure. Anyway these three things: if the Poles did these three things, would we then contemplate lifting sanctions? We didn't want to, the Europeans did, and I think that the compromise was that we would. In other words that they would apply sanctions, selectively, not exactly the same ones we would, but sanctions. But in return for that, we agreed that these sanctions could be lifted later. So we agreed to that conditionality, which was key.

Q: I would think that looking at it practically, every sanction has to be conditional; we don't put a sanction on somebody and no matter what they do it stays there.

SIMONS: Well, the feeling was so strong at the time, and this was an Administration that was really quite ideological. There were people in it who I think would prefer to shut things down and make things as difficult as possible if it ever came time to open them up again. It was a controversial issue within the Administration, and Haig really brought it through.

Q: Were you aware of what was happening within the very powerful Polish community in the United States? What were they…?

SIMONS: Later on in the 1980s, from ’86 on, I was very close to the Polish community, because I had the DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary) job dealing with them. In this early period not so close. I think that they were angry, they were for punishment, but they also wanted to keep the channels open for humanitarian assistance. I mean they really mobilized; their main effort was to send packages, to collect things for families and other Poles in their terrible economic situation. But in Soviet affairs I was not close to that situation.

Q: Well, at this time when you were doing this, what was the role of Caspar Weinberger and Richard Perle, some in the Pentagon who at that point were the right-wing people there?

SIMONS: That’s right, but we also had the watchers, watchdogs, in the Department. They were in Policy Planning; Paul Wolfowitz was in Policy Planning as Director. Ironically, Steve Sestanovich who later became Strobe Talbott’s successor as the coordinator for post-Soviet affairs under Clinton, was then in Policy Planning; and their job was to kind of ride herd on the rest of us; so it was not just the Pentagon, it was not just Secretary Weinberger and Richard Perle. Douglas Fife, later Rumsfeld’s Under Secretary for Policy under Bush 43, was there; Frank Gaffney was there. So the little team was there, and their role was to block things and prevent things from happening. But since there was not much impetus to do things anyway, they sort of had the wind in their sails at that point.

Now, and really what it was, the two things that were able to force forward movement were the Europeans, European sentiment which was actionable in terms of U.S. NATO leadership on the SS20 issue, and American political thinking.

What started to happen in the spring of 1982 was that people were getting scared, and I could feel it just by reading the newspaper articles. People were starting to get scared of this new Reagan Cold War, of things freezing up, and you started to get a serious nuclear freeze movement underway out there, if you remember, and it started to leak into constituencies which were important to the Republicans and to the Administration with a view to Congressional elections coming up in the fall of 1982. It started to eat into the Catholic community, you started to get Bishops debating and pronouncing on just war and on nuclear issues. Methodists, Lutherans, other conservative constituencies were becoming upset. So it’s not just the Europeans at this point a year into the Administration: it was also their own constituencies with the Congressional election coming up. That is what I would say is the origin of the President’s speech in March at his Eureka College in Illinois, offering the 50-percent reductions in ballistic missiles. In other words this was another whole move that was agreeable to those who believed the Soviets would never accept it, and by others because at least it put something on the table and kept the process going, and maybe it could happen.

So that was the situation as of March. Then you got into the gas pipeline controversy, which was another ideological issue for conservatives within the Administration, who feared that the Soviet were going to develop this pipeline which would hold Europe

hostage, and saw the Europeans as weak-kneed, they are accommodating animals, they tend to roll over when that happens. It's the same thing that is happening in Iraq.

Q: You might explain the basics of the pipeline controversy.

SIMONS: Well, the pipeline was a natural gas pipeline from the Soviet Union, and European dependence on Soviet natural gas was increasing. I think for West Germany it was something over five percent at this point, and it was seized upon as an issue by conservatives, saying do we really have to push the Europeans to protect themselves; I don't know if they wanted them to turn aside, to refuse to build it or refuse to contribute to it; I don't remember the specific issues. I think Tom Niles in his oral history testimony will have much more on that, because he was the Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of economic issues at this point. Anyway they built and built. I believe it was the issue that Haig was fired over, or that he resigned over, because we were in New York for another UN meeting when it happened. But you had continuing pressure. I mean you had the Eureka speech, which gave us the position on strategic arms…

Q: The Eureka speech was at a college in…

SIMONS: …in Illinois. In Illinois, it was the President's alma mater, where he proposed 50-percent reductions in strategic ballistic missiles. But pressure continued to build and after that speech, in April/May, the idea arose that the way to get away from that pressure was a Haig-Gromyko summit, in other words a U.S.-Soviet meeting at the summit. Summitry has always partaken of magic, and this was very clearly a case of if "we could only have such a meeting then we wouldn't actually have to worry about actually doing positions," and the Soviets were coy when we mentioned it, and they had agreed to do some talking on geopolitical issues which was for them was kind of a concession. They had agreed to talk about Africa, to talk about not Afghanistan but Africa, and the approach we were proposing and moving toward was a meeting with Gromyko in June, to do geopolitical issues in the spring and arms control for a summer. In other words, we were trying to slow down the pace of moving toward a summit, which we didn't like. The State Department actually doesn't like summits very much because it doesn't trust the leaders to kind of stay on a sensible message.

Q: Now with Reagan, in a way it made very good sense, as he was right off the range.

SIMONS: No, I actually found he was very good at these summits. I wasn't at Geneva, but I think he skinned Gorbachev alive at Geneva. You know, it was a fireside summit, he got all the good feeling and he gave absolutely nothing away, which created a major problem for Gorbachev when he got back home. Anyway that's a little further on down the road.

We had agreed to talk about these geopolitical issues, and again it's Haig's idea of balancing them in order to counter-balance arms control. What we proposed for that Haig-Gromyko meeting in New York in June was to use the meeting to set benchmarks for progress toward a summit. The basic stress would be on geopolitical issues beginning

with Afghanistan, then southern Africa -- you remember you had civil wars in Mozambique and Angola and the Cuban troops there; Savimbi was kind of a favorite of ours. They talked arms control as well, and the main result of the meeting was agreement to abide by the SALT II provisions, even though SALT II was ungratified, and to go ahead and have bilateral talks on Afghanistan in July. At that New York meeting Crocker --Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Chester Crocker -- did have a sidebar meeting with Gromyko's deputy Korniyenko on southern Africa. No substance transpired, but we were very much in a process mode of getting these geopolitical issues recognized by the Soviets as legitimate parts of our agenda.

I should say something about Haig because it's going to be very important when we get to Shultz. Haig was Kissingerian also in the sense that didn't give sort of equal weight to human rights, compared to arms control and geopolitical issues. With encouragement he would hand over or would have one of us hand over these lists of family reunification cases, which had been traditional from the previous Administration. But he tended to include human rights among bilateral issues, in other words not with a full-standing international importance in its own right, and he sort of had to be managed. Kissinger once said that the real human rights issues are peace and war. Haig was a little bit in that mode; he would do it, but he wasn't full-throated. So for him it was really arms control and geopolitical issues. And then Haig got fired or he resigned from New York over a decision -- I forget even what the decision was on the gas pipeline -- that had been moved and announced in Washington without consulting him.

Q: Did you while you were dealing with him -- Haig was your boss -- did you and others in the Soviet circuit get the feeling that Haig was being undermined by apparatchiks in the Reagan Administration and the National Security Council, or in the White House or in the Pentagon? In other words, was he sort of under fire by Reaganites? Did you get that feeling?

SIMONS: We had that feeling; we had that feeling, there were little bits and pieces of evidence. I can remember when Bill Clark who was the Deputy Secretary of State went over to the White House to replace Richard Allen when he had the trouble with the fellow with the Japanese or Korean watch as National Security Adviser. Haig made the funny comment that he was delighted because now that he would have someone close to him also close to the President.

We got the feeling that he felt that a lot of the people he was dealing with over there were kind of not up to the geostrategic mark and thanked God that he was not with that team. It was just a general feeling; I was surprised -- I mean I was in the room when he told us that in New York, up there as part of the delegation for Gromyko up there -- when he announced that he was resigning. There was a shock. But I was not enough privy to what was going on at that high level. So it was more sentiment than based on knowledge.

Q: Well, were you viewing Haig as being the leader and doing the right thing? I mean was Haig your man?

SIMONS: Yeah, Haig was my man, and I think we were his men. He considered us a team. I thought he had excellent instincts: I mean the instinct of being tough and negotiating, the basic instinct of U.S. Cold War policy, strength and negotiation. He had that, whereas a lot of the other people in this incoming Reagan Administration said strength was all that mattered. You know not just strength now and negotiate later, but strength now and don't worry about a later stage. I think Haig too was actually biding his time a couple of times to keep that negotiating option going, but of course it aroused mistrust because the rap on the State Department from conservatives was that the State Department would negotiate anything and negotiate anything away. Of course there is something to it in the culture in the building. I myself didn't mind that we didn't have a lot of active negotiations going on because I felt the Administration lacked the confidence in these early days to negotiate.

Q: Well, were you also looking at the other side of the hill, sensing that you had a certain group of leaders, a gerontocracy around Brezhnev, and who was going to be your negotiating partner? I mean in the whole Afghan business some described them as a bunch of elderly crocks who didn't know what to do and made a stupid decision. I mean did you have a feeling that not much was going to come out of them for a while?

SIMONS: We did. Our Administration didn't have the confidence to negotiate; their administration didn't have the capacity to negotiate. I mean they were past the stage that they were in to the kinds of bold decisions, the kinds of courageous, politically courageous, decisions that real negotiations involve.

So we didn't expect much from that either. I was sort of at ease, but as I said previously in the interview it was because I felt both countries were basically on the defensive, so I wasn't afraid of current confrontations except by mistake or stupidity. So I slept well during those years when a lot of people were sleeping badly. I didn't mind them sleeping badly, because I also thought it was going to take the pressure of people of good will on the Administration, as well as successful management of that pressure, to get that confidence back.

Q: What about Congress?

SIMONS: Congress was not very engaged at this point. Congress was not very much of a factor. I mean it was very preoccupied with the domestic; well I mean the Republicans were on a roll in Congress. I mean first on the tax cuts and then on defense. You were getting these huge defense budgets, and Tip O'Neill was kind of fighting a valiant rear-guard action with his band of happy few up there, going around saying Reagan's the most popular president of the last thirty years, what are we going to do? So Soviet policy was not one of the issues.

There were demands: I mean you had the nuclear freeze movement, and it had support in Congress. To the extent that Soviet issues arose, the grounds that the Congressional pressure took were the same as the general political pressure, which is a demand for bona fide arms control, a bona fide arms control process. But it was not so much a demand for

any arms control result, specifically. What they wanted was the process, the confidence that the two countries, the two superpowers were managing the problem, rather than reductions per se.

Q: Did you in a way -- it's almost sort of cynical but as somebody who has been around for a while and others in the State Department -- was there a feeling that with this new Administration let's keep things…let's not rock the boat, let's not do anything, and let the kids grow up? I'm talking about the Administration, yeah, a new Administration comes in, they are full of piss and vinegar, and there is really a big learning curve. So sometimes it's best to just not do much for a couple of years.

SIMONS: Well, because I wasn't afraid on the basics I suppose there is something to that. But I will have to say -- I can remember thinking at the time -- I thought that we would be back doing basic business with the Soviets in maybe a year. The truth is it took four, but the pieces were falling into place, it took two years for the pieces to start to fall into place, and then they were frozen up by KAL.

Q: To shoot down the plane...

SIMONS: Korean Airlines Flight KAL 007 in late August in 1983, and the result of that was that by the time we started to climb up out of it we were in the U.S. election year, with series of weak Soviet leaders following Brezhnev's death in November of '82.

Q: When did Haig resign?

SIMONS: Haig resigned in June of 1982. Shultz took over.

Q: What was sort of both the reaction of yours when Haig resigned, and where do we go, what happened within your sphere of the State Department?

SIMONS: Well I think, you know, you just keep chugging away. You look for the issues and you look for opportunities and you defend yourselves and the policy against craziness or lunges. That took two forms over that first year under Shultz. Shultz himself was very careful about Soviet affairs when he came in. He didn't feel that he was very confident about it; and he saw what happened to Haig. I think Shultz felt…Shultz is very much a leadership man. In other words, he believes that policy is top-down, made at the top level of leadership. He is wonderful at using his personnel, using the machinery as we call it, but his peers are the President, Giscard d'Estaing, Lee Kuan Yew, you know, the leaders of the world, and not Tom Simons.

Q: No.

SIMONS: I think that he spent really most of that first year consolidating, learning to know the President, seeing what wave-length the President was on, trying to deal with the gas pipeline controversy. The gas pipeline controversy took a whole year to solve.

Q: How was it solved?

SIMONS: I'm not sure.

Q: This is it: all of a sudden we're all concentrating on it, and then all of a sudden it goes away and nobody remembers what it was.

SIMONS: It was solved over a year of negotiation with the Europeans, and we came together at the Williamsburg Summit in May of 1983. I think Nakasone was there also.

Q: The Japanese Prime Minister.

SIMONS: Yeah, and for the rest of his tenure Shultz kept a table from the Williamsburg Summit with their names, the names of the leaders around him, in his private conference room on the Seventh Floor of the State Department, because he was proud of that achievement and it was sort of an enabling achievement, I think, for clearing the decks, for being able to go forward.

The other thing that happened during that year was Richard Pipes' famous NSDD-75 (National Security Decision Directive). Richard Pipes is the President's Special Advisor on Soviet affairs. He was a Professor of History at Harvard with a distinguished bookshelf of books on Soviet and Russian history, conservative, of Polish-Jewish origin, anti-Communist; he had been part of the Committee on the Present Danger in the late 1970s, warning against weakness vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. He was there from the beginning of the Administration in '81, but Harvard has a two-year leave of absence policy, they won't hold your seat if you are gone for more than two years. So Pipes in the middle of '82 is coming up on his deadline; he had six months to go; and so he quickly gathered this effort to come up with a new Soviet policy or a Soviet policy paper that would be authoritative and that would represent what the Reagan Administration was really after. So I was very much engaged that summer of '82 in putting that together. That was one of the two planning exercises that were going on. The other was preparing for Brezhnev's death: what are the contingency plans for…

Q: What?

SIMONS: Brezhnev's death.

Q: I take it that Brezhnev's death was a long-drawn-out thing. What were we thinking? Because the succession in the Soviet Union is not always a set thing.

SIMONS: I think that's right; we didn't have any sense that it was going to bring big departures. I think we looked out and I think we had sort of identified Andropov, the KGB chief Yuriy Andropov, at least as one of the prime candidates. There were one or two others but they were people in the Brezhnev mold; they didn't represent substantial departures. The question was how we would react, because a lot of the argument about the Soviet Union in American politics and in the American administration is not about the

Soviet Union but about America; it's about whether we have the capacity to handle whatever is defined as a Soviet threat.

It comes out in specifics. I'll talk about the Brezhnev death contingency later, but all through that summer in 1982, we were wrestling over the NSDD that Richard Pipes was pushing for. There was a question of the terms of reference, and we got the terms of reference sort of settled, but only after I went over to negotiate the terms of reference, what would be the basic structure as a document, with Pipes face-to-face; and I discovered he didn't like face-to-face, which is a good thing to kind of know. So I managed to get final agreement on the terms of reference with Pipes, and then he went on vacation in August, and at that point, we put them to bed, and I had CIA write the basic analysis and they had very sound people: Robert Blackwell later became Vice President Bush's favorite Soviet analyst; he used to travel with him on his trips. I had my people in SOV, Larry Napper for one, write the basic recommendations.

But the terms of reference objectives were three, the basic points of the document were three. The first was traditional containment, resist Soviet expansion, that's the foreign policy part: to resist Soviet expansion. The third is also equally traditional: you try to negotiate agreements that are in the national interest. So that's the negotiating part, the sort of traditional positive part. It was really the middle objective, the second objective, that was more controversial, because this was a question of using -- I think it ended up – of using the limited means at our disposal to encourage movement in a democratic and liberal direction. That's the internal political change objective.

Now I'm not sure that objective appeared in previous policy documents. It was dear to Pipes because he liked the idea that it should be U.S. policy to promote regime change in the Soviet Union. I knew it was going to be in there, because I think the President also believed, and the Secretary also believed, they believed fundamentally and I guess in someway I also believed fundamentally that the way the Soviet Union acted as it did in the world had something to do with the way it treated its own people. That the aggressiveness, the nastiness, the threat had something to do with its being a dictatorship. So something on regime change was going to be in there. It was very much a question of emphasis, and so what happened was that while Pipes was away I had this document put together that didn't emphasize it a lot. It was in there, but not very strongly, because I knew that when Pipes came back he would go to Mark Palmer, who was my boss as Deputy Assistant Secretary, and together they would strengthen it, and if it started weak it actually wouldn't come out bad. And that's the way it happened.

Q: I mean the idea of more democracy in the Soviet Union is a nice thing but it sounds like a non-starter.

SIMONS: Let me give you an example from the operational effect of this. Pipes once held a meeting in the State Department, he came over for it, of all the people who are engaged in what I think we now call public diplomacy: they were people from the radios, people from USIA, and he said, "We have to make a decision to use the radios and our other media to call on the subject peoples in the USSR to rise up against the system. Now

we would have to call on them to rise up." I said, "Well, that's a great idea, but there may be problems with it…Hungary…

Q: In 1956.

SIMONS: In 1956. But I said, "In principle, you know, I think we can all agree that's a worthwhile thing, but I think we are also ought to go through what would actually happen if we started to do this, because there are hundreds and thousands of people out there who would take us seriously, and they would try to act on this call, and they would be put in jail, their kids would never go to college, whole families would lose out." He said, "We shouldn't care about that." He said, "This is a matter of principle for the U.S. government; self-determination has been a principle of the U.S. Government since Woodrow Wilson." I said, "Well that's certainly true, I mean we have a number of principles like that, but I think we still ought to go through what's actually going to happen when people answer our call." I just kept repeating this and getting people on board, nodding, and by the end of the discussion it disappeared. But that's the kind of thing that these principles can do when they turn into practice.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: Anyway, it came out of the very same document. But in a way documents like this actually didn't have much practical effect; they were so close to what we were doing that they didn't have a whole lot of action effect. And then Pipes was eventually replaced by Matlock.

Q: Well, you know, I thought a little as you were describing Pipes and Simons on this thing, maybe you are talking really about the academic versus the Foreign Service Officer.

SIMONS: I think that's right.

Q: The academic would look at things in big terms and you've been on the ground, and you can see…you know there are faces out there that…

SIMONS: I think it is more than that, ideology, because really the American ideology is something most of us share.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I'm not against ideology. I'd rather see the peoples in the Soviet Union free too; it's a question of how to get it and what are the consequences of actions. The other thing was this wonderful -- I forget what it's called, it has a name, it's a contingency planning exercise. CPPG is what it is called, Contingency Policy Planning Group; anyway this was planning for Brezhnev's death. It was over rather quickly, because the issue was rather – again, the kind of issue we get into in practice -- was whether we would favor factions within the Soviet leadership in the event of Brezhnev's death. We

very quickly agreed that we didn't know enough about it; we didn't know enough about it to play on factions even if we wanted to. So it was agreed that we would emphasize continuity of policy.

Pipes, in this case, was pressing for a grand bargain. That's the other thing that you get into with academics. He was pressing for us -- when Brezhnev died -- just to load up the agenda with huge dollops of economic manna in return for cuts in Soviet defense spending. I mean it's kind of mechanical; but this was his idea. He may have been looking back to Stalin; I don't know. Or there may have been opportunity when Stalin died and we didn't take advantage of that, under the incoming Eisenhower Administration. Perle was there. Perle also talked about bargaining, although he didn't press it very much. I think he wanted to keep open the question of whom at which level we would send as a dignitary to the funeral. In the end people agreed that it would be the Vice President, but he kind of took a reserve on that time. So when the time actually came in November -- I'll just finish this story -- because when the time actually came and Brezhnev died, I was on the phone to our DCM in Moscow, Warren Zimmerman, and so I got the first news of his death: funeral music was playing on the radio. Fortunately it was after hours at the NSC; Pipes had gone home. So I called over and got my buddy Ollie North and I said, "Ollie, release the message saying that the Vice President's coming." Ollie saluted and released the message, and that's how we got…

Q: Without getting into this: Perle was trying to send the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture or something like that. I mean in other words there is plenty of room for downplaying.

SIMOLNS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so that's how we did that. The first of his three visits to the funerals of Soviets.

Q: This is a lot later, Ronald Reagan was saying, "They ask me why don't you have more contact with the Soviets?" He said, "Well they keep dying on me."

SIMONS: Well, the story was that out at Andrews Air Force Base the crew that did the Vice President's plane had a little plaque in the office that said, "You die, we fly," and listed Brezhnev, Andropov, and then Chernenko," and there was lots of room down below: American humor.

Anyway the big thing we talked about that summer, struggling over the NSDD-75 policy document on the Soviet Union and in the CPPG, the Contingency Planning for Brezhnev's death, but the real issue that summer was preparing Shultz for his meeting with Gromyko, that annual meeting at the UNGA that would come up in September, because it really would be his baby. He did a lot of self-education; I mean he's a careful, deliberate man; he could talk to a lot of people. I had a new boss because Larry Eagleburger had moved upstairs, and Walter Stoessel who was my Ambassador in Moscow had replaced Clark as the Deputy Secretary -- I think he was the most senior Foreign Service Officer that we've had in that job, maybe in history still. But anyway Shultz was educating himself. Burt was the new Assistant Secretary for Europe…

Q: This is Richard Burt.

SIMONS: Richard Burt, an arms control expert who came from being the Director for Political-Military Affairs, Assistant Secretary for Political-Military affairs. In fact he wanted badly to educate Shultz in arms control, and he set up a sort of series of seminars on arms control, of which there was ONE. He said to me, "I don't know why he didn't pick up on this." I said (to myself), "I know why, it's because you were trying to lecture Shultz." He was a little bit too tutorial for Shultz. Shultz was quiet, but he had been Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Chicago.

But anyway, the general agreement was continuity but openness to improvement, and that was OK with him. We talked before the meeting of letting these so-called geopolitical talks go forward. Crocker wanted to meet with his counterpart on Southern Africa, who was a man named Ilichev, and I went with Crocker to Geneva just before the meeting with Gromyko in New York. Shultz agreed, so we proposed another round of talks on Afghanistan; we had just had the one.

But he also put human rights up front. Remember that I mentioned how Haig was a little diffident about human rights. Not Shultz: he put human rights up front, and it's because, as I mentioned before, that he really -- like the President, and this was one of the things that they had in common – really felt that Soviet international behavior had very much to do with their internal structures. So he agreed with this; he wanted to be constructive with this line; we wanted to say we want constructive relations but you are refusing constructive relations; that's what he wanted to tell Gromyko. We are the injured party.

So that was the meeting, and you can imagine it wasn't much of a meeting, that first meeting in New York. I think I remember running out and getting nuts for the meeting because there was no apparatus; in New York we met in one of our ambassadors' offices, and it was not very well prepared. Gromyko didn't pick up on the idea of talks on Afghanistan, but he did agree to expert-level contacts on southern Africa and on non-proliferation. Interesting: non-proliferation was something we had sort of put out there, something that Shultz cared about, and it was a Shultz idea, not a Gromyko idea; it was picked out of the pot. He also had before him the same bilateral list Haig had; Haig had been pretty free with telling Gromyko this laundry list of things that were unacceptable -- just all over the line, this was unacceptable, that was unacceptable – so it was kind of hard to figure out what our real priorities were.

Shultz kind of systematically went through that list beforehand, and he picked out really just a couple or actually one, he limited it to one, and that was that we had been saying for some years that it would be unacceptable to us if Cuban combat units or high performance jet aircraft entered Nicaragua. So he put down a red line on Nicaragua, on the Cubans in Nicaragua, and we followed up, and actually a little later there was some evidence that they had listened to it. And that was an important signal back, because some months later we got an intelligence report about intelligence that the Soviets had

told their people there that weren't going to be high performance aircraft down there. So that was kind of a good sign.

Q: While this was going on, was some of the diplomatic battle being waged in Western Europe about the response to the SS20s? Was that part of the picture now?

SIMONS: Well, the diplomatic struggle on the SS20s was indeed being waged, the arms control negotiations were going on, somewhere around in here you had Paul Nitze's famous walk in the woods with Yuliy Kvitsinskiy. Yuliy was his Soviet counterpart in the INF negotiations. So there were initiatives, there were little steps being taken, very much with European political opinion in mind, and with the need in mind to reach an agreement or deploy our GLCMs and Pershings by the end of 1983.

Q: Well, during this period -- I mean this was not your province, you were working with the Soviet Union, but you're in the European bureau -- was there any concern about West Germany maybe being somewhat neutralized, I mean apparently this was part of the Soviet thing of getting the Soviets to say, "OK, you can have East Germany, or something, if you get out of NATO". Was there any…?

SIMONS: No.

Q: …that wasn't part of NATO?

SIMONS: No. I mean there was worry that you would get a softening of the West German commitment to deploy, but there were none of those more cosmic fears of neutrality. I mean I think we actually felt that we could win that battle if we were halfway agile and smart enough. At some point Kohl, I forget when Kohl came to power…

Q: Helmut Kohl.

SIMONS: Helmut Kohl, and he was very firm on this issue and strong, and I think he had quite a considerable victory, I'm not sure exactly what year it was. But that kind of fear I hadn't…

Q: That wasn't…

SIMONS: That wasn't an element or a factor. We just didn't know that we were going to have to work so hard.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: Now, the last communication -- I mean just to give you a little historical highlight on the role of human rights in this relationship -- but the last message that the President and Brezhnev exchanged was on Sharansky. It was on the Soviet dissident Natan, as he is now called, Anatoly as he was then called, Sharansky in prison…

Q: A Jewish dissident in the Soviet Union.

SIMONS: A refusenik, in other words somebody who wanted to leave the Soviet Union and was refused permission to leave, and here he was in prison for professing that. Actually he was in prison for having given state's secrets to Los Angeles Times correspondent Bob Toth, my friend. That was when I was in Moscow in 1976, and Sharansky had given Toth a list of the jobs that a whole bunch of refuseniks had had, the basis for the state's refusal, including their jobs in security, defense, various places. That was what he was actually, I think, condemned for. The last message the Soviets sent the President (before Brezhnev died) was on Sharansky, I think it said they'd handle the case according to their law, and I remember Shultz calling me up to his office and asking, "OK, Mr. Soviet expert, what does this mean?" and I said, "What it means is they are not going to let him die. I mean he's in the pokey, but the fact that they sent it meant that they were not going to let him die." This was a time of very heavy work on START…

Q: Strategic arms…

SIMONS: Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, as we had rebaptised them to distinguish it from Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) that was the label that the "weak" Democrats had used; now we were going for "strong" START reductions instead of just limitations.

Then Brezhnev died -- I mentioned calling my friend Ollie North and getting the message released, which was conciliatory -- and then we went to Moscow. It was OK, but not much. Andropov succeeded him, the KGB chief. They were leaking that he used to listen to jazz and read Western novels, but he was the KGB chief. He was smart but also ill.

That was in early November, and in late November Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin came in and suggested to the Secretary a full-scale review of our relationship. On the sixth of December he brought in a message that said the Soviets wanted it to focus on concrete issues, on essentials. Now what that meant, when they say "essentials," is they don't want to talk about human rights. For them "essentials" was arms control. They also wanted to talk at all levels of the government. They wanted to have various talks at various levels all the way down to the desk. So what they were saying was "let's have dialogue everywhere, but not on everything." In other words, just on the things we want to have it on, but let's talk everywhere. This actually appealed to Burt, because he was a new Assistant Secretary, and he sort of wanted to go to Moscow and sort of make his mark. We were getting all sorts of probes at this point about secret channels. Arbatov the head of the U.S.A. and Canada Institute, Georgy Arbatov, who had played a major role in détente, was sidling up to people saying that he could get something together.

But in late November we heard -- I mentioned it before -- we heard rumors in Managua and they spread also to Washington that the Soviets had told the Nicaraguans six weeks before that they wouldn't get jet planes. So Shultz's "unacceptable" on jets for Nicaraguans had gotten through, and we took it as an oblique response to the Secretary. It had a certain importance there as a signal.

Then we tried an indirect probe in January of '83, after Christmas, on Sharansky. In other words, we were trying to get some loosening up on this one major case. I think the person we went to -- I forget who it was now -- was so shocked he kind of ran out of the room. I mean it was not a very effective choice of a secret emissary; that was in Moscow. But then Andropov sent a message to French Communist Party chief Georges Marchais on Sharansky. It was not to us, you know, back to that indirect channel, but again confirming that they weren't going to kill him. He was still there, but they were doing things that they didn't have to do, which was of interest. It's the kind of thing that disappears underneath the waves of history, just so odd and not much public play.

All through January I was working with Dobrynin's deputies at the Soviet Embassy on a list of all the agreements that we had, agreements on everything under the sun. I remember going to the documentation on, what do you call it, treaties in force; we were going to the Legal Advisor's Office to get everything we had with the Soviets on all the issues no matter how old, things back into the 19th century. It was very much a George Shultz idea because the Soviets were…

Q: Czarist bonds?

SIMONS: Maybe, like that. The Soviets are saying "You're tearing everything down," and he wanted to say, "No, look what's here. Look what's still here, this is stuff we still have." In early February the Soviets tested a new light ICBM that appeared to be a second missile. We weren't sure that that was in keeping with our arms control agreement. Dobrynin brought in that notification. He also shared with Eagleburger in that time frame that the SS-5s, or the SA-5s, a surface to-air missile that they had deployed in Syria, were going to be used only for the defense of Syria. I mean that's the kind of thing that scares the hell out of the Israelis, and so he wanted to give that assurance.

Then on the 15th the review meeting took place. It was planned for the review of all these bilateral agreements in force, those that had lapsed, those that were pending, you know, just this dull-as-dishwater review of what was here. There were dozens of these things, really hundreds. But when Dobrynin came in, the Secretary took him down the back elevator and they went over to see the President. It was Ronald Reagan's first meeting with a senior Soviet, I think, in his whole life. They stayed two hours while Eagleburger and the rest of us sat there sipping something in the Secretary's reception room in his office while they did it. Then they came back and we sort of had a review with Dobrynin. It turned out to be an interesting meeting and it produced a test of an odd kind. I think Oberdorfer actually gives a good account.

Q: This is Don Oberdorfer who was at that time on the…

SIMONS: The Washington Post.

Q: A Washington Post reporter.

SIMONS: A senior reporter covering U.S.-Soviet relations and writing about them later in The Turn, and the Secretary in Turmoil and Triumph, his memoirs, also I think comes to that meeting as important. Because what happened was that the President spent about a third of his time talking about the relationship. He said we weren't trying to threaten but we felt threatened. Another third he spent talking about START arms control and showing himself to be very well briefed, I mean in charge of the issues. And the last third he spent talking about these Pentecostalist families who had been in refuge in our Embassy in Moscow since 1978. There were two families of Siberian Pentecostals who had sort of broken through and whom we had sheltered since then. I used to have to testify in Congress about them. They were just kind of a running sore: people in the Embassy had to feed them, they had shifts, they had rotations of Embassy officers and wives feeding these two families in the basement. They spent all their time reading the Bible and complaining that they weren't being treated adequately. I can remember testifying to Congress about them. Sam Gibbons who was a Democratic Congressman from Florida said, "What is to prevent us from just flying a helicopter in there and taking them out?" I said, "Well probably gunfire, because it's Soviet airspace that you'd have to go through to get them out." But anyway: human rights, the President talked human rights with his special emphasis on the Pentecostalists.

Q: Well he saw things in personal tones.

SIMONS: He did, he did. He was not like most college-educated Americans, he saw things in parables, I mean in human terms and a lot of visuals, but varied and symbolic. Lech Walesa was like that when I was Ambassador to Poland.

Q: It often is a great gift; it gives much more rapport, I think it is a little hard for us who are sort of professionals to relate to something like that.

SIMONS: Well, later on I'll tell you another one of my stories on that, because it was hard for Gorbachev, but he got the knack to deal with him, because Reagan also uses these little stories to avoid talking about issues.

Q: Well, tell me while you are talking about this: during this whole time you have not mentioned the word Helsinki. I mean this was considered by many people to be sort of the clue to a lot of things that happened in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and it had already been set in place. Was this at all…Helsinki, of course…

SIMONS: Yes, Helsinki was important because, well it was important for a lot of reasons, but it was important especially because it gave a license to dissent in these Communist countries.

Q: At the time you were talking…

SIMONS: At the time the importance that it had was in the extraordinary meeting in NATO after Polish martial law, because we did not want to say that the reason that you have to punish these people was because they were bad. So what we said was that the

reason we have to punish them is because of Helsinki. So it became the rationale for punishing them for their bad acts.

Q: In a way it was probably the first time that all of a sudden someone looked around and saw Helsinki, which before had been considered kind of a giveaway to the Soviets because of the postwar boundaries.

SIMONS: And particularly by the Reagan campaign against Gerald Ford in 1976. I mean Helsinki had been part of the bill of indictment as a giveaway, and then it took the Polish crisis to get the Reagan Administration to adopt it. I helped with that. But it was not a big element in terms of defining our policy until later. I mean it grew over the years until Reagan's trip to Moscow in 1988. In the one speech that I had a huge fight over and won was the speech that he gave in Helsinki celebrating Helsinki as one of the greatest things of the 20th century. There was some plaintive Foreign Service Officer who I think probably had his career kicked to pieces earlier for having negotiated Helsinki who wrote an op-ed piece for the Post saying, "What's going on? these are the people for whom Helsinki was anathema."

Q: Well, I've interviewed George Vest, who talked about how Kissinger was torpedoing him while George was negotiating the Helsinki Accords and Kissinger was telling Dobrynin, "Don't pay any attention to that man." Well, in a way, you can't help feeding his ego. It wasn't his thing.

SIMONS: Wasn't his thing.

Q: Yeah, but anyway…

SIMONS: It took most of the Reagan Administration to turn Helsinki from a pariah into caviar in terms of U.S. policy.

Q: This is tape 6, side 1 with Tom Simons.

SIMONS: Thirteen days after that meeting on February 15, 1983, the Soviets gave us an answer on the Pentecostalists. On February 28 they came in with a message that said that the case would be handled in accordance with Soviet law. It didn't say anything else. But I remember it said they would treat the case taking all the factors into account, that's what it was, it was just Soviet policy, taking all factors into account. What had happened was that the President had been talking about it. Now what happened before that was that one of the members of the family, because they had refused to leave the Embassy, one of them got so sick that we took her to the Soviet hospital on January 30th. She was Lidiya Vashchenko, and she was in a Soviet hospital when we had that meeting on February 15. And on February 28th a message comes through on a piece of paper saying we will work the case taking all the factors into account.

We decided to take it as a test on their part. We said, "Why don't you let her go back to their village in Siberia and not do anything, and we'll watch that." It was played

something like that. Of course, the best thing would have been for them to come straight to the U.S., but the Soviets were not going to do that. They kept saying that the family had to go back to Siberia, to their village first, and we said, "Well, why don't you take a chance?" I had to mobilize the President of Middlebury College, Olin Robison, who had been an adviser during the Carter Administration on the Seventh Floor at the State Department. We hired a plane for him from Middlebury down to Washington and sent him on to Moscow because I knew he was an ordained Baptist minister, so he knew how to talk to people like them. He spent a lot of time talking to the Pentecostalists about that, trying to get them to go back. They let Lidiya go back, and some of the others went back, I think, in April.

Meanwhile, we had a lot going on in arms control. We had some proposals on verification; we moved from zero to an interim position on INF. I forget exactly what it was, but it was kind of a step forward on arms control, but on IMF and not on START. We went for equal levels and, of course, March was also the speech where the President proposed making offensive weapons "impotent and obsolete" by working to deploy a defensive shield against them.

Q: This was known as Star Wars.

SIMONS: Star Wars, we entered the Star Wars stage. I was totally surprised; I had known nothing about it.

Q: I think almost everybody was.

SIMONS: I think Richard Perle was surprised. I heard that Richard Perle was surprised too; he had not expected it. He quickly figured out how to use it, though, so that came out. I'm not sure when the Evil Empire speech was; I think that was somewhere around the same time. Anyway, all of this showed a new self-confidence in the Administration. Meanwhile, the economy was going pretty well; we were recovering from that Reagan recession, the body-blows after the tax cuts; rearmament was tooting along. I mean there was rearmament, big time rearmament was tooting along. Kohl, I think, was elected in March...

Q: In Germany.

SIMONS: …in West Germany. The Allies seemed to be with us. So you could get a feeling of sort of confidence and buoyancy that there hadn't been before. In early April we made proposals for military confidence-building measures: hotline upgrade, military-to-military talks, links between the Embassy and the Foreign Ministry. We proposed doing something about nuclear talks: oh, by the way, these were the nuclear non-proliferation talks that Shultz had proposed and the Soviets had agreed to, that had taken place in the State Department earlier that year and had been wonderful. When non-proliferation experts get together they really know what they are talking about.

Q: Both sides really didn't want anybody else around them.

SIMONS: Yeah, it was in each side's national interest. So things were starting to accrue. The Pentecostalists left the Embassy for Siberia in April while this was going on.

Q: Had the assurances been given?

SIMONS: No, we were taking a chance, it was an experiment, what do you call it, testing.

Q: With live people.

SIMONS: With live people, without assurances, but it was something that the President had talked about. Maybe they were testing the President? What they wanted was no crowing. In other words the President had said, "Just let them go. How can you treat your people this way? Let them go, I don't have any interest in exploiting it politically." So they were testing.

The President also decided to propose renegotiation and a long-term agreement on grain sales, which was something clearly in our interest. That was one that Carter had continued with rather than go with it as a sanction after Afghanistan. In the middle of April, they suddenly accepted the hot-line upgrade, in other words a military-to-military thing…I mean not a military but a notification upgrade. They expressed interest in military counter-terrorism, but turned down the other two things that we proposed: the links between the Embassy and the Foreign Ministry and the military-to-military talks. But we had a process underway now within our Government for shaping small items and putting small items out there and getting them to the Soviets. A small package within the consular field -- consular experts' talks -- and thinking of ways to sort of shake that thing down.

It was still a struggle. I don't want to say everything was clear sailing, as there was still a lot of struggle within the Administration over small things. Conservative John Lenczowski was a young man who had been with us in the State Department, a very sincere conservative young man, and he was over in the White House writing these memos that made everything proposed for dealing with the Soviets cosmic. You know, we were proposing renewing the cultural agreement, proposing getting back to the Kiev and New York consulates. Back in the '70s we agreed to open consulates in Kiev and New York, but that had fallen by the wayside. After Afghanistan the Ukrainians were dying for us to have a consulate in Kiev. But for Lenczowski this became kind of the end of the world.

Q: Tell me at this point, from your perspective, what was the role of Dobrynin? During the Kissinger period one has the feeling that Dobrynin and Kissinger kind of got into a little room and didn't talk to anybody else and they were doing all sorts of things that the Bureau was cut out of. What was your feeling about him at the time?

SIMONS: The Bureau was cut out?

Q: I mean in a way Kissinger and Dobrynin were operating…

SIMONS: Special.

Q: …a special relationship and not a lot of communication down below. Now we had Shultz and Dobrynin and you were there. How did you…

SIMONS: The Reagan Administration was the only Administration that I know of --well the recent ones in principle -- but it was the first in years and the last in a long time where Shultz managed to put together a straight-line hierarchy for dealing with the Soviet Union. It started with the National Security Advisor, through the Secretary, and then down to me, in this case. That was really kind of the way things worked. So he didn't want a special relationship with Dobrynin. Dobrynin would come in because he knew Hartman was proposing…

Q: Arthur Hartman.

SIMONS: Arthur Hartman, our Ambassador to Moscow, liked the idea because he was trained under Kissinger too; he liked the idea of a structural kind of special relationship. As for Dobrynin, one of the reasons he could propose all these talks at all levels was because it put him in the middle. He also wanted things to be clear; he knew things were difficult. My idea of Dobrynin, although I haven't read his memoirs except where he mentioned me…

Q: The Washington read.

SIMOLNS: The Washington read. But I think he knew things were difficult, and I think that he was supporting, as I was, the process. What he was interested in was in getting processes going that could move things, and, I think, he was probably making recommendations to his own government: "you know, hey, agree to this level thing, it's a small thing and what's important is to get things done." He was talking to a government that said, "The United States is responsible for everything, it's not up to us, it's up to the Americans." This was king of a mirror image of what our conservatives were saying. So I think he was a constructive force in this period in getting the process going.

Q: Were we doing anything that the Soviets would find irritating? I'm thinking that would be the counterpart to the Siberian Baptists…

SIMONS: Pentecostalists.

Q: …Pentecostalists. But I mean did we have some things, sort of irritants that we were doing that they really kind of felt, well, were reaching to get rid of?

SIMONS: There were things I barely remember. I mean they had kind of a people's revolt against their vacation house on Long Island Sound, near Oyster Bay. The

community said "We've got to kick them out, it's a den of spies." and we had to kind of lobby with them to say, "Look, this is perfectly legitimate, they pay their rent, they deserve…;" you know, we would do that kind of thing. Well, you also had these expulsions; but they were expulsions of spies and that was sort of tit for tat with both sides trying to control that. That almost blew up on us in '86, but that's part of a later story. That was the Daniloff arrest in '86.

Q: Yeah he was Newsweek was it? It might have been U.S News and World Report, I don't know.

SIMONS: I'm not sure, but anyway we'll come to that. In the spring of '83 things are starting to roll. Dobrynin, I think, was constructive but maybe mainly not so much in terms of substance. I mean substance was heavily fought over, starting in INF, the arms control thing, but on the other side you had the slow accumulation of small forward steps. Then you had the Williamsburg Summit in June, the one that Shultz was proud of for having somehow, I don't know the details though I should, for having put the gas pipeline to bed. Part of a series of allied summits, really a firm solidarity at a high enough level, which was important to us, and in return, I think, we stopped the guerrilla warfare. That may have been the trade-off, stopping the guerrilla warfare on the gas pipeline in return for Allied solidarity on INF deployment at the end of the year.

Burt was recommending to the Secretary getting the right decision on the cultural agreement and on the consulates. He wanted to nail down a trip by the Secretary to Moscow. Hartman had however seen Gromyko at the end of May, and Gromyko was downbeat on almost everything. I think the other side of Dobrynin was Gromyko. I think Gromyko was profoundly pessimistic. I think his deputy Korniyenko who was the Deputy Foreign Minister – we knew Korniyenko well because he had served in Washington a number of times -- was not particularly anti-American but was very pessimistic that they could do business with the Americans at this point. Gromyko did reaffirm the assurances about Syria, which was a good signal on the SAs. We had a potentially disastrous NSC meeting at this point on the cultural agreement and on the consulates. In other words, imagine the National Security Council of the United States meeting to decide whether we should propose to the Soviets to review a cultural agreement, which is very much in our interest in terms of "subversion," and Kiev, which would get us into the heart of the Ukraine. When Lenczowski was in charge there it was all fighting and nothing kind of came of it.

Q: Was it sort of posturing on the part of some people, do you think?

SIMONS: I don't think so, I think it was sincere. They really feel we were too weak to deal with the Soviets and that if you give them an inch they will take a mile. It all has to do with our resolve.

Q: This brings back something. During the Kissinger period one does comes away with the idea that Kissinger had the attitude that he was essentially dealt a losing hand or a

diminishing hand and that the Soviets were on a roll, which at that time they appeared to be. When Dobrynin came in was there a different attitude, do you think?

SIMONS: Well, it's even more important than that. I don't know if I've talked about it in my previous…

Q: Well, you can mention it here.

SIMONS: Well, this is a question of how most of the people who were active in the Administration early on about the Soviet Union were people who knew a lot about the Soviet Union but were very pessimistic about America. Very many of them were originally Europeans of Jewish origin; either they or their families had come to this country in the devastation of Europe. I mean they had come from the ruins of Europe after the War to a country with ordered liberty which they felt could stand up to tyranny while preserving our democratic system and our freedom. Then something happened in the '60's; for people of that cast of mind something terrible happened in the '60s, some spring snapped. They felt something essential had been broken in this American paradigm that they had come for and believed was there.

Q: This was known as the '60s.

SIMONS: The 60's, I thought we became stronger after the '60s.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I mean I thought that despite a lot of wastage and a lot of wreckage, I thought we were basically stronger. I think we are a stronger country and a stronger society, but these people did not. So they had grave doubts about America's capacity to deal with the Soviet threat. Kissinger was one of them, even though they hated Kissinger in the Reagan Administration. Pipes, Wolfowitz inside, Eddie Luttwak outside; Richard's family Romanian-Jewish, Richard Perle; anyway that kind of doubt, being bearish on America. I can't remember exactly when, but I remember this happened, and I thought to myself suddenly, I think this is the time when Bill Clark went over to the NSC…

Q: This was Judge Clark.

SIMONS: Judge Clark who was the Deputy Secretary of State and who then went over to replace Richard Allen as the National Security Adviser. I thought to myself, "These guys are from California, they don't know much about the Soviet Union, but they are bullish on America."

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I said if I have to choose I'm going to go with the Californians. George Shultz, although he was raised in Massachusetts with an Eastern education, got off the plane in June of '82, I remember him coming to Washington said, "I'm George Shultz from

California," because he is politically astute, attuned. But anyway I think that was the division. They basically felt that if you get America right we are not going to have a problem with the Soviets; we are going to be able to handle the Soviets and any problems. Since that was the way I felt, that is one of the reasons I was at ease with that Administration. As long as I've got protection to do my work, which I did.

So on June 15, 1983 the Secretary of State goes up to the Hill to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Charles Percy of Illinois was head of the committee. He normally spent Christmas figuring out what to have testimony or hearings on. He came up wanting the Soviet Union, it got deferred by the Middle East, and by pure happenstance it came up on June 15th. Shultz went up there with testimony that was perfectly flat: it was strength and negotiation, it was their fault but we were ready for improvement. It carried no message, it was conveying no signal, and the next day Don Oberdorfer in the Washington Post said, "Shultz sounds a new hard-line note on the Soviet Union." Phil Taubman who was his counterpart at the New York Times said, "Shultz starts conciliatory note vis-à-vis Soviets." I remember Les Gelb who was at the New York Times called me and asked, "What did your boss actually mean?" And we had to figure it out. So we gathered, and I remember talking about what are we saying about the Soviet Union. And the consensus that came out of that meeting was we had recovered our confidence, America had recovered that, and now we can deal with the Soviets.

Q: Was Shultz at this meeting?

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: I mean you were all talking with him figuring out what we were trying to say?

SIMONS: Yeah, we had to do the guidance, he met with Dobrynin on the 18th, three days later, and what he told Dobrynin was that we recovered our confidence, and we were ready to meet. He also announced the President's decision on the consulates and on the cultural agreement.

Q: He said that Kiev would open?

SIMONS: We would negotiate the opening of Kiev and New York, and we wanted to go forward to renew the cultural agreement. Now remember that the NSC meeting on these issues had blown up, it was inconclusive. He had gone to the President himself on that, and he had gotten the President on board. So that is what he told to Dobrynin -- we have recovered our strength and our confidence -- and he gave Dobrynin the communiqué as proof we had restored our strength and confidence, that would put an end to the gas pipeline and reaffirm the determination to go forward with INF deployments. I noticed that McFarlane, who was now the…

Q: Budd McFarlane.

SIMONS: …The NSC advisor, an old chum of Shultz' and even more of Larry Eagleburger's, bought into it too. I started using that line all through the summer. Early July was devoted to reviewing the bidding; I didn't know where we were going. We had all this stuff out there for small moves and things just started to move. It looked like a mini-thaw in the summer of 1983. It's important to remember because it is two years before Gorbachev. Things started to move the summer of '83, it didn't have to wait for Gorbachev; things were moving at a lower level, small. The Soviets released the Vashchenko family to go to Israel. There were two Pentecostalists families in the Embassy, and they let one go. The Chmykhalovs, the other family were still there, and they also got out in July. But already in June the Vashchenkos had gone to Israel. Then we agreed that the talks on hotline upgrades would take place in August. Both sides made small moves in START, in other words the big apple strategic arms reduction talks. Also on INF. We tabled the draft treaty on MBFR, the conventional arms talks going on in Europe, which had some real steps in it on verification, which is important for that. Shultz and Gromyko exchanged letters on Afghanistan; they didn't say anything but at least that was sort of now on the agenda. So things were moving.

You had this big kerfuffle meanwhile in Madrid. Max Kampelman was the head of our delegation to CSCE in Madrid, and he'd tried to organize something taking a plane over and flying dissidents out and that fell through. He was dealing with a KGB counterpart. But they did do some low-level releases of dissidents that fall. We had a good exchange in consular review talk sessions, so things were moving. At the end of July, you got ready to conclude the grains long-term agreement, which raised the level by half, good for our farmers. They agreed to it quickly, and this was in a situation where the Soviets had been extremely slow about everything. So things were moving, and the Chmykhalov's, the second Pentecostalist family, got out to Israel in July. July and August we were preparing for Madrid: there was going to be a CSCE meeting in Madrid, scheduled to culminate this European security review process. We were spending a lot of time there. Andropov had seen the Pell delegation…

Q: Claiborne Pell.

SIMONS: Claiborne Pell, the Democrat Senator from Rhode Island…

Q: Rhode Island.

SIMONS: …and the ranking Minority Member on the Foreign Relations Committee. No, yeah, that's right, that was what he was because the Republicans had the majority. Anyway, Andropov did a lot of the adlibbing; things were going well. We even had a dry run of the willingness to negotiate in the case of the Berezhkov boy, who asked for asylum in the middle of August in the United States. He is the son of Stalin's German interpreter, who was assigned to Dobrynin's Soviet Embassy here in Washington. It was a huge flip-flop; most people….

Q: I think he was a kid, I mean…

SIMONS: He was a kid.

Q: He was a teenager.

SIMONS: He was a teenager, and he wrote a letter to the New York Times, and they published it because they didn't have any choice, saying "I want asylum" and we had to deal with it. It took two huge weeks; it was the kind of thing that had torn the Administration apart a year before and maybe the Soviets too. Dobrynin was away and his two deputies were there, Oleg Sokolov and Viktor Isakov. They actually came up with the solution. Burt was here in charge and Shultz was away. So we had to do it in the middle of August, the middle of vacation, hearing this boy out. Their Embassy was surrounded by journalists, cameras, and they were confused. But they came up with the idea of an INS interview at the airport on the way out, and that was done by the Soviets, it was very creative. I can remember going on the plane taking him back to Moscow with Burt and Rick Inderfurth, who was ABC at the time, asking on the way out, "Oh, you are going to let this boy escape," and Burt just shutting him down. I said to Sokolov afterward, "It's probably the first negotiation Burt's ever been in with the Soviets that he's wanted to succeed." It worked, so all of this was kind of on track and things moving ahead. I will conclude it here because you have this mini-thaw movement, on small things but genuinely across a variety and breadth on the agenda, and then you have KAL.

Q: Okay, well, we will pick this up, and this is '83, is it?

SIMONS: It was the end of August 1983.

Q: 1983, and we will pick it up: KAL and,,,

SIMONS: …and what have you.

Q: Okay, today is the 26th of October 2010, and this is a continuing interview with Ambassador Tom Simons. The date is now August 1983, and you said you wanted to talk about Pan Am, was it 103?

SIMONS: No, it was KAL 007.

Q: I mean KAL.

SIMONS: It was KAL 007.

Q: That was the one that was shot down by the Soviets over the Kamchatka Peninsula?

SIMONS: Right.

Q: That's right.

SIMONS: As we led up to it I suppose maybe we're walking over the tail end of what I said before. What had happened that summer was that the Soviets had loosened up a few bilateral things. Things were loosening up in the summer of '83, and I think we felt within the Administration, the leadership felt, that the United States had kind of restored its confidence and its position in the world and it was ready to talk to the Soviets after these two years. The Soviets were responding in a very tentative way. They were blaming some of the small things that we had out there as too small; you were going on toward a meeting with Gromyko coming to Washington in connection with the UNGA, which was a traditional way of getting together. In August you had survived the Berezhkov incident, the boy who wrote to the President, the son of a Counselor at the Soviet Embassy who said he wanted to stay in the United States. We had managed to handle that, to work out a way with the Soviet Embassy for him to leave after we'd asked him if he still wanted to. We interviewed him at the airport, so we were fulfilling our laws and procedures; that was actually at the suggestion by the Number Two Counselor at the Embassy, Sokolov. So that was handled, Rick Burt and I sort of did that, Shultz was on vacation, but it was amicably settled. I'm reminded of this most recent spy kerfuffle that we have now, working that sort of thing out. Back then, of course, the electric charge on an incident like that was even higher, because we hadn't had good relations for a long time and there was a lot of suspicion.

Anyway, things were sort of on track, and I think it is important to stress that because the historiography is split between those who say it is all Ronald Reagan who kind of spent them into the ground and the other side says it is all Gorbachev in the beginning of 1985 and he was responsible for the end of the Cold War. I think this chronology shows that Reagan was ready in 1983, and then that was the significance of KAL. It was a terrible tragedy in its own right, 269 people killed, but what it did was it froze the relationship into the election year of 1984. The President was under a lot of pressure -- he was in California – and he was under a lot of pressure from the conservatives within his Administration. Caspar Weinberger, the Defense Secretary, was ready to freeze all Soviet assets, to stop all arms control negotiations. At State our position was that we should not let the Soviets turn this into a bilateral issue, something between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, that we should join the world in indignation at what the world was angry about which was the killing of peaceful air travellers. So we should lead world indignation on that and we did, in the UN. I remember Jean Kirkpatrick playing the tape we had of the Soviet pilot in the UN. But we thought our direct sanctions should be limited to the transportation field.

Q: Well, when you got this news within a short time, what was the feeling: that this was a military foul up? that it was an attempt by higher command within the Soviet structure to hurt relations? or how did we feel about that?

SIMONS: I don't know, I think we felt that it was an act of beastliness far beyond whatever justified incentive they might have had for doing that sort of thing. I think there was a range of opinion as to why they did it. Shultz was extremely indignant; Sy Hersh, Seymour Hersh, in his book on KAL suggests, I think unfairly, that Shultz played the indignation in order to consolidate his position within the Administration, and I don't

think that was actually the way Shultz worked. I mean he was genuinely indignant in leading this Administration, but the important thing was that the President, out in California, himself decided that relations with the Soviet Union must go on, that he would indeed lead that world indignation but that the arms control process would go on. And there were a lot of other things we had to do to have a continued relationship with the Soviet Union; so he rejected that advice as he consistently did from his right wing.

Q: Did you feel there was almost a definable group of people who were trying to shut down relations with the Soviets?

SIMONS: I think "shut down" is excessive, but I think it was "slow down," make it one step at a time, one step only if they took a step, so everything at a molasses-in- January pace, in order to prevent people like me, people in the State Department, from rushing down the slippery slope to giveaway, which is what they suspected. I think there was something on both sides, because it was true that the State Department likes to negotiate -- the career services like to negotiate -- so to that extent Richard Perle kept us from the lesser angels of our nature for two or three years, and then we became tougher. By '83 we had a tough position, which was that we have recovered our strength and we are ready to negotiate, and that was the President's position as well. I think it started earlier, but they remained suspicious up until very, very late in the game, and then they disappeared in 1987. Weinberger and Perle in Defense were gone, and others with this kind of heavy suspicion were gone, but it took a long process to get there. Anyway, that was the significance of KAL.

It brought to a stop a slow but discernable movement toward reengagement upon both sides. Then that fall we deployed the Pershings and the GLCMs in Europe in response to the SS20s; that was a hot autumn. Shultz managed to preserve the meeting at Madrid with Gromyko, but he had a very, very narrow mandate just to talk about KAL and human rights; it was a very angry meeting. I remember them coming out of their private meeting, two dignified older men, with red faces; at a certain point Gromyko threatened to stand up and walk away and Shultz just sat there, and Gromyko didn't leave the room. But it was a bad meeting, and direct relations were on hold as we deployed, and then they walked out of the arms control negotiations, START and INF and MBFR; they brought everything to a halt.

Well, by that point Jack Matlock was in the White House serving as the President's senior advisor on Soviet affairs, and he wrote a speech at the end of the year which Reagan really adopted: it said that we have recovered our strength and we are ready to negotiate. Then in 1984, the election year, we followed up on that, the Soviets were frozen, Andropov died in February and was succeeded by another elderly gentleman, a protégé of Brezhnev's, Chernenko, who was also very old. Soviet policy then had even less dynamism than before; they were angry at our successful deployment. At that point, fortified by Reagan's speech that really set the policy tone that we are ready, we started to put things on the table all through the course of 1984; we put proposals on the table.

Q: How does one put things on the table?

SIMONS: You make proposals to them. I can remember doing it at various levels, for talks on various things, specifically for air safety, though not on the transportation agreement we had pulled out after KAL. When KAL went down, that was in the Soviet Foreign Ministry for renewal, and we went and took back the note because of KAL. But generally we felt free: you had a government consensus of "let's put these things out there," because those who didn't want negotiations didn't think the Soviets would accept them. Those, like myself, who kind of liked the idea of negotiations or at least putting these things out there as test of Soviet intentions, thought maybe they would accept it at some point. In any case, it would give us the high ground in the public relations battle in an election year.

Q: Did you feel with the departure of Andropov and Chernenko, that neither really had time to make a great impression, but that there really was something possible to happen in the Soviet Union, a generational change?

SIMONS: Oh I thought that. But I also don't think you can make policy based on that kind of hope or sense. You have to have a policy that can be sustained in good days and bad; but I think we were developing that kind of policy. It was an interesting year, because it was the year they pulled out of the Olympics at the last moment. It was ostensibly on security grounds, but we had done everything possible to make sure security out there was good. We talked to them a lot about it and had given them assurances. At that point it seemed to me like a political decision, all the more so since they cancelled a major high-level visit to China at the same point. So it seemed to me that they were going into a general freeze rather than just one directed at the United States.

Q: Why?

SIMONS: Because they were fighting about the succession.

Q: Wasn't there a tit-for-tat thing going back to the '76 Olympics or something?

SIMONS: Well, we pulled out of the Moscow Olympics in 1980 because of Afghanistan, so there was that inertial drag on Soviet policy, but they were acting very late: they were coming and preparing to come, and we were bending over backwards to make sure if they didn't come that it wasn't anything that we hadn't done. I think that was a more general thing, and I think it had to do with this Party Plenum they had in the middle of the year in which something happened with Gorbachev. I think it was a division of labor, that Gorbachev was kind of designated to be Chernenko's successor as a younger man on the Politburo. I think they were very, very preoccupied with the succession, and it is a generational succession because they had these four elderly men. When I went to Andropov's funeral I asked our CIA analyst Bob Blackwell -- Bush was the head of the delegation, and we were there in Spaso House watching it on the television because there wasn't room for us on Red Square -- but I said, "Look at the four guys in the Politburo on the mausoleum, the four main guys, Chernenko, Tikhonov, Ustinov, and Gromyko," and I said, "I bet they're 300 years old; how old are they all together?" He calculated in his

head and said, “They are exactly 300 years old.” So they were obviously heading toward a generational thing, and I think that is what preoccupied them.

But we kind of used it, and we had a wonderful session in the White House in the middle of summer on people-to-people contacts where we had the President come out and read the list of all the offers we had made.

Over the course of the summer of ’84, the election year, another sort of very important but kind of subterranean development took place, because the Soviets began to what I would call release the bilateral side of the relationship. When they walked out of the Olympics, things were frozen. We had a wonderful incident along the way. I sort of developed the theory of the hibernating bear: that they were drawing in upon themselves during this time of transition struggle. I gave that to Art Hartman who was our Moscow Ambassador. He went back to Moscow, and there he met with Andrew Knight who was the head of the London Economist, and the Economist a bit later ran a story with Chernenko on the cover saying ‘Farewell cruel world.” The point being that they were the ones who were isolating themselves; it was not us; we were ready. You had that meeting in June with all the little things.

Then, beginning in July they started to agree to talks on some of these various things that we had put out on the table. I think that was a significant development, because it meant that they were kind of adopting our sort of procedural approach, that the process is kind of more important than the individual thing. So, I mean, we need to keep a relationship going even if we weren’t in much agreement, and coming from them that was important because their tendency was to say you have to deal with the big things first, and then we’ll deal with the little things. Historically the Soviets… actually the Russians are a little bit that way too. If you want to build a house they always start with the roof and leave the walls for later; we always start brick by brick and leave the roof for last. I called my little book on this period a bricklayer’s song because that is what I felt I was. Anyway, they started to release the bricks before the kind of roof they wanted was in place, over the course of that summer. Then Gromyko -- he did come, but he had to cancel in the wake of KAL because the White House made sure that he couldn’t find a decent place to land his plane -- so he pulled out and didn’t come in 1983; he did come in 1984. There was a meeting in which he was going to see the President.

Q: He was still…

SIMONS: The Foreign Minister.

Q: …the Foreign Minister.

SIMONS: He was Foreign Minister still. He came in 1984, and he still had meetings in the State Department, but he made clear that what he wanted to talk about was what he called “the question of questions: do you want peace or do you want war?” In other words, they were looking for a bead on the real Ronald Reagan. In ’83 they’d had some indication -- they tested him on this Pentecostal issue and releasing the Pentecostalists in

our Embassy, that he attached some importance to because to him it symbolized what was wrong with the Soviet Union, the way they treat their people, and that therefore, from his point of view, and also Shultz', explains a lot about how they act in the world -- so that had been a test, and Gromyko was really there on behalf of the Politburo. He kept emphasizing that in order to see who's the real Ronald Reagan, peace or war, nuclear war or not.

I think it was during that exchange that…I think it is true, I'm not sure exactly of the timing, but there was one of those earlier exchanges, which I'm not really sure is in the history books today…where Gromyko was promoting the elimination of nuclear weapons, which is an old Soviet position going back to the '50s, and Shultz said, "Well if you are really interested in it, why don't you talk to the President, because he would be interested in it too." I mean it was kind of a premonition of Reykjavik and of course now, twenty-five years later where nuclear abolition has become a more real prospect than it was in Shultz's day. Anyway, Gromyko came and saw Shultz. There was a description of the meeting that was kind of tough and feisty. Then he went and saw the President, and he asked the President the same questions. I'm telling you, Ronald Reagan, when it comes to questions of peace and war, of what's wrong and who threatens whom, he was at his best, because that is also what he thinks is important. So he really gave Gromyko all the right answers. We don't want war, it cannot be fought, it can never be won; it should never be fought. We don't intend to threaten you, we don't intend to…all of those things, and Gromyko took that as a kind of agreement in principle that the Soviets needed really to do business, needed in their history to do business kind of down below. He went back to their Embassy and changed the draft of the TASS communiqué on the meeting.

Q: TASS being the Soviet news agency.

SIMONS: The Soviet news agency, which was the official…

Q: T-A-S-S...

SIMONS: Which is the description of their view as a government on things that had happened; it is a government monopoly. Anyway, Gromyko changed it to make it much more positive, sort of overnight. Which I thought was all right. Then during the course of that summer I remember Isakov, the very bright second Counselor of the Embassy -- he and Sokolov were kind of in charge in Dobrynin's absence on vacation – and on one occasion I remember him saying to me, "You know if we could really move forward on these things we could offer you a bumper harvest for the President in the election year." I said, "The President doesn't need you for a bumper harvest." He said, "I know it."

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: Then immediately after the election, the day after the election, Reagan sent Chernenko a message reiterating his willingness to move. We then had to negotiate the terms of the communiqué, the announcement that Shultz and Gromyko would be meeting in Geneva soon. I did that and we got it out on November 22nd : one of the advantages of

being in the office on Thanksgiving is that you get to work announcements like that. So it moved very quickly after that, into 1985 to the meeting in Geneva with Gromyko.

At that point Shultz had given his own speech in the run-up to the election, this was his speech on U.S.-Soviet relations at RAND in Santa Monica on October 18, in which really for the duration of the Administration…it always comes back, but he basically put to bed the question of linkage. It's important because whether the relationship was declining or whether it was improving there was always a temptation to link the issues you care about to issues that they care about.

He wanted to deal with that kind of in a new way in order to avoid that kind of tension and the impulse to haggle. They were opening a new institute on Soviet affairs at RAND in Santa Monica, the Air Force Research and Development research center in Santa Monica, California. He wanted a speech from us, so we kept sending drafts out there, and he kept sending them all back, because he wanted something different. In the end he wrote that thing himself, maybe with Charlie Hill -- Charlie Hill was his confidant and speechwriter, a career Foreign Service Officer now at Yale. Anyway, he put together a speech in which he dealt with the linkage issue in the very best way: you do things for an adversary like the Soviet Union that are in your interest; if arms control is in your interest you go for it; if human rights are in your interest you go for them; and you respect the things they identify as in their interest; and you try to work things out. But you do not stop pursuing things that are in your interest in order to punish them, in order to punish them for not coming through on something that we don't like, except in very extreme cases.

Then you keep on going, he said. And at that point we had in place this four-part agenda, which has become a well-known hallmark of the era, and it was something that I developed with him. The four parts are arms control, regional issues, human rights and bilateral issues. Jack Matlock was our Ambassador at that time, and still today I'm reading in his latest book on Superpower Illusions about a kind of different characterization, because he is out of the '70s and is always uncomfortable with human rights as were people who worked under Kissinger. So he has three parts for the agenda: regional security, military security and people-to-people contacts. Actually he doesn't have a human rights category. But in the official thing we put together and that Shultz used, he put in human rights. We made human rights a fourth category, and it was right up front.

Q: What did you do with this linkage business, would you say that the lack of human rights was more interesting? Was there a different tone to the Kissinger era than of the Shultz era?

SIMONS: I think there was. I think Kissinger felt there was more scope for negotiation; I think he came to being over sanguine about his capacity to negotiate things. He certainly was hesitant about human rights, partly because of his opposition. Henry Jackson was using human rights in order to torpedo arms control, so he had that hesitancy about human rights that Haig carried over. We used to get Haig to hand over these lists of cases

that we wanted resolved, either dual-nationals or refuseniks. He usually would have somebody else do it, and he just didn't want to say the word "human rights;" he was just very Kissingerian. Kissinger used to say "peace and war is also human rights," but then real human rights he kind of considered in a lower category. But then it WAS used against him as a torpedo.

I think by the '80s things had calmed down. Reagan gave a speech at Westminster in 1983 that really said our support for human rights is universal: it's not just something that we beat the Communists with under Republicans and something that we also beat right-wing dictators with under Democrats. It was one of our elements in relations with Chile; Pinochet was kind of somebody we otherwise liked. Reagan made clear with our friends as well as with our enemies that human rights are universal and for our policy too; and that calmed down the argument somewhat. But also Shultz liked it because he liked the President, and I think because it reflected the President's belief that what was wrong with the Soviet Union was the way they treated people. You are not going to be able to move forward aside from politics on our side, unless they are willing to sort of move on that.

Anyway, we got to '85; we had that good meeting in Geneva in January that put together kind of the matrix of how we were going to negotiate. There was the four-part agenda, the statement that there is a relationship between offense and defense when it comes to strategic weapons, and then I think there was stuff against the extension of competition to space that was very important to the Soviets. Shultz at that meeting began the practice that he pursued the rest of the Administration of having everybody in the tent on our side, and that included Richard Perle. I can remember at one of the preparatory meetings before we went to Geneva, Shultz looked around the table and said, "I have the skin of a rhinoceros for things that are said to me directly, but I will not tolerate leakage." Richard looked up and said, "Why am I here?" But anyway when he was under discipline he was a good soldier; he was constructive at that point.

'85 started by trying to figure out ways to move forward in a situation of a kind of leadership seizure in Moscow. Chernenko now was ill, and we had had this successful meeting in Geneva but now found it difficult to move forward. We had another one of those terrible incidents that tended to flair up in U.S.-Soviet relations: we had the killing of Major Nicholson in Berlin, one of the members of our Military Liaison Mission, these military liaison teams that are authorized to go into the territory of the other side and are really military intelligence on all sides, military spies. Anyway, this man was shot, and then I think it was a testimony to the upward trend that we could handle it as we did. I had a lot to do with that, but once again Weinberger -- it was his guy, Nicholson was a Major in the military, and he wanted to freeze everything and just stop the whole relationship. That didn't happen – we quickly put in place mechanisms to make sure it couldn't happen again -- but it was hard to figure out how to go forward.

Then Chernenko died, so we had George Bush's third trip to a Soviet General Secretary in Moscow. He was impressed with Gorbachev. The only person who was pulled out of a very long line of dignitaries waiting to see Gorbachev was Mrs. Marcos, and nobody knew why that had happened. When they finally got to see Gorbachev, Vice President

Bush and Shultz were impressed. His line was that really the world was changing, it means changes for both of us; if we are going to have to deal with this we are going to need some new thinking on both sides. The message that went back -- because these delegations report to the President every day -- the message that went back was that this is a different guy.

Q: Mrs. Marcos…

SIMONS: No, Mrs. Marcos was the…

Q: Oh, Marcos.

SIMONS: …yeah, of the Philippines.

Q: Oh my God.

SIMONS: They brought her up first, I don't know if they had some bilateral thing going or what, or something about Subic. But anyway once they got to Gorbachev Bush and Shultz were impressed, it was a positive message, and the message back was positive. There was then a meeting in Vienna, I think the last meeting that I went to, and I think it was an amazing meeting, because Gromyko just read his talking points for four hours, and then Shultz read his. In retrospect, I think, Gromyko was there because he wanted Shultz to ask for a summit so that he could be the guy who brought the summit back to Moscow, and Shultz wouldn't do it. Then Shultz read his talking points, so for seven or eight hours they read these perfectly predictable talking points in every area of the relationship. But it was also a meeting where Gromyko brought up human rights first; I think he wanted to get it out there and get it off the table. I thought, wow, this is a new kind of thing; but he didn't want to spend a lot time on it. Gorbachev in those early years when he talked about human rights, he talked about American human rights too; it was a reciprocity kind of thing. But anyway it was accepted as a part of the agenda, and it was our agenda, so the Soviets were sort of accepting it as they were accepting the idea of process. The process is as important in some ways as the substance, because it allows you to deal with things. It allows you, for instance, to deal with Nicholson; if we hadn't had other things going we wouldn't have been able to deal with a tragedy like…

Q: …the killing of our liaison officer....

SIMONS: …in Berlin, East Germany. Anyway, Gromyko sidled up to Shultz afterwards and whispered in his ear, "Do you have anything for me on the summit?" Shultz said, "No, I don't." So back they went.

Q: Was there a reason for that? Why didn't we?

SIMONS: Why weren't we ready for it? Partly we were holding back because of Nicholson, and also in general we had put a lot on the table over the course of the last year and a half. There were twenty proposals out there that they hadn't answered, so we

didn't feel under any particular pressure. Also, I think it was a little clearer in retrospect, but I think there was a feeling that Gromyko was a problem within their system and that he was an inertial force.

He was still Foreign Minister, and I think it wasn't until after he was kicked upstairs in late June to the "presidency" and Shevardnadze came in behind him…well he wasn't named Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet until September, but that is where he was going. We had a proposal out there for the summit, and I think Shultz may have felt that Gromyko wanted to be the man who brought the news back. But he was kicked upstairs in late June, and on July first they then accepted the November 19-20 dates for the summit in Geneva. It was clear to me what had happened, but other people didn't make the connection. I can remember going into a meeting after that and everybody saying, "Why'd they accept that now?" I said, "Because it's pretty clear Gromyko is not there any more." Anyway I don't think that entirely explains what happened, but I think in retrospect Gromyko was raising this in order to take it back, and partly in order to save himself.

You also have to remember that this was a soft spot in the Administration's self-confidence because a bunch of things had happened. The Reagan Administration more than I think most administrations -- although they are all like that to some degree – but it was extraordinarily important for them to feel good about themselves and especially in the public relations sphere. They prided themselves on their excellence at it, and they just had four straight body blows in succession. You had Bitburg, blowing up the President's European trip by having him visit an SS cemetery…

Q: This is…

SIMONS: …in Germany, right. During the trip to Europe you had the first vote in Congress blocking aid to the Contras in Nicaragua; you had a cutback in the MX missile program imposed by Congress; and you had a defense spending cutback to zero with inflation. So they were losing little battles on a variety of fronts. That kind of ate into their feeling of self-confidence and competence, and I think that may have played into our hesitancy here with regard to the Soviets. Anyway, by late June we were working drafts, we were starting to get ready for various things. I was fading out at that point, getting ready to leave SOV, but the process went forward. We had talks on Afghanistan in the middle of June, very unproductive, but at least we were talking on regional issues. Romanov the Leningrad First Secretary, a very conservative guy, was retired at that same time that Gromyko left as Foreign Minister. We announced on the third of July because we had to get Swiss acceptance for Geneva, and you had the feeling of a new era.

I was working the Pacific air safety agreement in Tokyo, trying to put KAL to bed. It was a trilateral negotiation, the Japanese, the Soviets and us, chaired by the Japanese, which was very important because they mediated on some of the stuff, and we were working on new rules and procedures for Northern Pacific air safety. It ended up with a two-week negotiation in Tokyo where I was the Number Two on our delegation. After it concluded I flew all the way across the USSR on FinnAir to get to the meeting in Helsinki, and I got

there just too late. It would have been the first meeting where I was at the table as Director for Soviet Affairs, and a Finnish policeman stopped me coming in from the airport, and the meeting was over by the time I got there. But I remember going to the party afterward, and Shevardnadze as new Foreign Minister was there with his wife; that was the first time. They were overwhelmed by journalists, just swarms of journalists at this party, and I remember walking along with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Komplektov looking at these journalists swarming, and he turned to me and said, "Uzhas," which means "horrible" in Russian. It is just not their style of doing things. But we were happy with Shevardnadze. What I brought back to Shultz from talking to the Soviet delegation was that Shevardnadze was not using his talking points. In other words, the prepared talking points, all the old talking points, and he would either send them back or just not use them, and we were kind of shocked; but it was sort of a breath of fresh air within their system.

So that was my part of '85. I then went off to the State Department's Senior Seminar, senior training for foreign affairs specialists, for a year. I was not at the Geneva summit in November. I was called back to help with this…I don't know if you remember the Ukrainian seaman who jumped ship in New Orleans…

Q: Yes, to the Coast Guard.

SIMONS: …into the harbor. Yeah, down in the estuary of the Delta. That was a huge thing, and once again it was a question of giving him his right to an interview before we released him back to the Soviets; there was terrible fear of fraud and huge publicity and a very high political charge. The Coast Guard was going crazy by the time I got down there -- they were about ready to storm the ship -- so there was a real diplomatic task down there to get a situation where we could interview him. I think to this day Richard Perle and other right-wingers believe that he wasn't the same guy that they gave us for the interview; at least that's what he put in his novel Hardline. At one point somebody from one of the Congressional committees tried to go aboard the Soviet ship with a carton of cigarettes in which was hidden a subpoena to the captain to come and testify, but they refused to take it. It was that kind of a thing.

But that was my one active involvement in the course of my Senior Seminar year. Of course, I followed the Geneva situation and the progress of the Summit, which was actually a triumph; it was a very good meeting. We felt that the President did very, very well. Probably the Soviets felt that too, but they didn't come away empty-handed. First they got a reconfirmation of the basic Ronald Reagan line, you know, that nuclear wars between us cannot be won and must never be fought -- that was in the communiqué and that was very important to them -- and that the real problems are not weapons but the mistrust between our two countries, and we have to work on that in a whole variety of ways. And also I think they thought he was sincere. They had felt that maybe he was controlled by hard-liners and right-wingers, and they have a tendency to look for the evil counselor, as many countries do in these things. It was a successful summit as far as it went. At that summit, however, Gorbachev agreed to back-to-back or home-to-home

summits in 1986 and 1987 in Washington and Moscow, but without getting anything on SDI. I mean SDI had been out there as an issue since March of…

Q: SDI again?

SIMONS: …the strategic defense issue, the so-called Star Wars issue.

Q: Star Wars…

SIMONS: … was the tag given to building a defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles, a defensive shield against those ballistic missiles. That had been an issue in the relationship since March of 1983 when Reagan first proposed it. The Soviets went back and forth as to what their top priorities were, but it was clearly way up there even if sometimes they put nuclear testing ahead of it. But at Geneva they got nothing substantive. The principles were good and the personal relationship was good -- Ronald Reagan was at his best as a man of peace, moving, sincere -- but they didn't have anything and they agreed to these two summits without any assurance of a positive conclusion on the things that they cared most about. So after Geneva in November of 1985, you spent the better part of a year kind of going back and forth. Negotiations moved forward, there was small progress here, small progress there, but basically the Soviets were unwilling to agree to a date for that next summit that they had agreed to at Geneva.

SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN WASHINGTON (1986-1989)

-- The Soviet Union

I came back in July or August in 1986 at one step up, vaulting from Director of Soviet Affairs to the workhorse Deputy Assistant Secretary job that had been Mark Palmer's; he went off to be Ambassador to Hungary, or rather first to learn Magyar and then to Hungary. So I took over in that situation of U.S.-Soviet hugger-mugger for the fall.

The first thing that the Soviets did, almost as soon as I was back in office, in order to get out of their bind of not having any assurances on things that they cared about but being committed to a meeting, was they came up with what I would call an "American" solution. In August of 1986 they proposed a process solution to their political dilemma at home, which was to talk about everything: to have these committees meet in Washington and Moscow about all four parts of the agenda and talk and see where there were things we could do together, with an emphasis on the positive and possible, and to report to Shultz and Shevardnadze when Shevardnadze came to the United States for the UNGA in September. I was interested in it, and when it got underway the substance actually went quite well. I did the bilateral part, but they came up with a bunch of experts even in the arms control part, chaired on our side by Paul Nitze: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is what his delegation was called because he had very white hair and he had a big interagency team including Richard Perle. Anyway, all these teams were coming up with

good things, as a kind of way out for the Soviets, and they were going to report to Shultz and Shevardnadze when he came to this country in September.

In the meantime, though, you had another one of these blowups that happened in U.S.-Soviet relations. We arrested a Soviet spy who did not have diplomatic immunity in New York and New Jersey, and in retaliation they arrested an American correspondent. The Soviet spy was named Gennadi Zakharov, but Nicholas Daniloff was a correspondent in Moscow so you had these two…

Q: Wasn't he a…

SIMONS: He worked for U.S. News and World Report.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: Actually there was stuff that happened, it turned out in the end, such that you could understand why they were suspicious of it. He was not in fact a spy, but he had been doing things that could have aroused suspicions. I think our State Department Legal Advisor at the time, Abe Sofaer, looked into the case and came to the conclusion that if we had that kind of evidence on one of theirs we'd think he was a spy too. He wasn't, but here you were in this major thing, preparing for a summit or providing the evidence that would determine whether there would be a summit, that was from the Soviet point of view a way to get off this hook that they put themselves on in Geneva. In the meanwhile you had this huge blow-up over these two guys being held.

In my eyes the episode proved that the relationship was maturing, getting better, because you could work both of these things. You could work the dangerous, electric public and political opinion issue of the spies while you were going forward with this substantive work preparing for Shultz and Shevardnadze. Of course, when we managed to get a solution it was not entirely satisfactory, because it involved remanding their guy to their Ambassador after he pleaded no contest, and Daniloff to our Ambassador in Moscow, and alongside the release of a major dissident. Everybody said "well that's a payoff," and we had to deny it and bite our tongues. But it was worked out, and then you had the meetings of Shultz and Shevardnadze, which were good but inconclusive. I think the spy thing put a little damper on that. I think we were also struggling at that point with reducing Soviet personnel in the Embassy here in kind of retaliatory squeeze-downs of embassy personnel, again on spying grounds.

But anyway nothing had been decided, and then out of the blue again came a leap forward of this new Gorbachev leadership -- not new, maybe, it was a year old at that point -- but proposing a "meeting," not a summit but a "meeting" between the leaders in London or in Reykjavik; and we chose Reykjavik. I'm not sure if it was on aesthetic grounds or what, because Reykjavik is a very small place, 220,000 people in the whole country, and it's a pretty small town. It turned out to be neat, though, and I think all of us who were there will remember it for the rest of our lives as kind of a homey place too. I was on both our advance teams, and it had to be prepared very quickly. We were not

expecting a whole lot. You had hints, the Russians saying you are going to see some new things, we said okay, that's great. But we were not expecting a sort of breakthrough, we were expecting something more incremental, just some progress. I don't think we felt under the same kind of pressure that Gorbachev did. Gorbachev had come forward -- in an attempt mainly to consolidate his strength in the Communist Party Central Committee, I think -- with these massive disarmament programs, which are the kind of things expected of a Soviet leader. It is just what I called election planks after the election: abolition of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, deep cuts in conventional and other kinds of weapons. So we didn't have the sense of a breakthrough that was imminent, that Reykjavik was going to be a blockbuster.

Well, it turned out to be a blockbuster, because the Soviets came with just an astonishing set of proposals for reductions in offensive weapons. The President had sent them a letter on July 26 that was something that he had put together himself (and he didn't make either State or Defense entirely happy) and which proposed a 50-percent reduction in ballistic missiles over a certain period; I forget what the period was. That was the President's own proposal, and it was important at Reykjavik for a particular reason. They came into Reykjavik with these fabulous proposals on the offensive side, and they were kind of holding back about SDI. We knew that SDI was terribly important to them, but while they were laying out these proposals on the offensive side, which were really ground- and path-breaking, they weren't pressing on SDI yet in those first meetings. Then they agreed to a very Shultzian type of suggestion: let the delegations work all night and report to me and Shevardnadze in the morning, and then we will see where we are. So we worked all night. My successor as Soviet Affairs Director Mark Parris and I went back to our hotel and I think slept in the same double bed for two hours before going back into the meetings; tremendous progress had been made on the offensive side.

Then the two leaders talked about other things that morning, and then that afternoon came the critical session, the Sunday afternoon session. I was the U.S. notetaker. and it was Shultz and Shevardnadze, the two leaders, two interpreters and two notetakers; so eight people in the room. At that point you had the famous confrontation on SDI. We had adjusted our proposal some to provide for 50-percent reductions in offensive weapons in the first five years of a ten-year agreement but for the second five years for elimination of only ballistic missiles. Gorbachev didn't understand the proposal or professed not to understand it, and I don't think he did understand it, or at least its rationale. And the reason we had come to that was because it was the President's July 26 proposal, which had already been chopped by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, so we felt we were secure in putting that forward. But Gorbachev kept saying that he didn't understand that: why the difference between the first five years and the second five years, he kept asking that, and Reagan kept saying, "I was told upstairs that you only cared about ballistic missiles." He said, "No, I'm just trying to understand why this difference." Then they got more and more heated and more and more emotional. Then at a certain point Reagan said, "Well if that's the way you feel about it let's just get rid of them all." Gorbachev said, "Yeah, okay, let's get rid of them all."

Then it started to calm down. Both Shultz and Shevardnadze went back to talking about SDI. Gorbachev then told us on the side that when they said testing "only in the laboratory" they did not mean a cinder block building, they meant it could be a test range as large as the United States, but what they really didn't want was strike weapons in space; that was their bugbear. They wanted assurances that we wouldn't proceed down that path. And in the end Ronald Reagan was unwilling to give those assurances. He started using political arguments, which I thought was unfortunate -- you know, "I'll be savaged at home if I go back having given something away on SDI" -- which I didn't think we should do with the Soviets. Both Shultz and Shevardnadze also intervened in their own very characteristic ways. Shultz said, "Let's total up what we've agreed on and what we haven't agreed on, and let's do a balance sheet of where we are on these things." Very Shultzian. Shevardnadze was saying, "If we don't come through here this is a historic moment, if we don't come through here, then our peoples reading this record will never forgive us." Very high-flying, very Soviet thinking. In the end it was gridlock on SDI. Ronald Reagan stood up and got ready to walk out. I think the Soviets later told us that they had anticipated everything but that, everything but no results at all.

I think Gorbachev at some point also made a poignant remark, "But if we don't succeed here it will be left to the next generation to do what we have been unable to do here." Of course, that's poignant in view of the movement to eliminate nuclear weapons that is underway 25 years later, or 23 years since it started in January 2008. Anyway, so the meeting broke up. I think everybody was kind of stunned, and I remember Gorbachev saying, "Say Hi to Nancy." He was trying to calm things down as he was walked out.

But both sides had a terrible immediate problem as to what they were going to do at the press conference. In other words, how they were going to define the next steps or the way forward after the breakup? On our side the President was shocked. He moved around the basement, there at our Ambassador's Residence where he was staying, repeating "Just one word, just one word:" since he thought symbolically he had fastened on to that "laboratory testing." For his part Shultz had a real problem because he was going to be the spokesman at the press conference. He came out and announced, "I've never been more proud of the President for what he did today," and then proceeded with the line that we had made a lot of progress and that we have to build on it and keep going forward. The danger for us was that the Soviets would convince the world that SDI was the only obstacle to making amazing progress on offensive weapons, that it was sort of the cork in the ass of this amazing progress on the offensive side that was something the world would welcome. Not all of it, because I'm not sure that some of our Allies didn't feel it would have been too radical had we been able to get it all, aside from SDI. But enough of it; so that was our problem, and Shultz's solution was the line that we made a lot of progress on a lot of things, and let's move forward.

The Soviets, Gorbachev when he spoke afterward, expressed disappointment and kind of left it hanging as to where they were going to go and how they were going to treat this. Obviously, SDI was an obstacle, but he was not definitive on what to do with the progress that had been made, whether it went off the table or not. They took the better part of a week to figure out what they were going to say, and then they adopted our

practice of sending envoys to major European capitals to explain their view of what had happened; we'd been doing that for years. I inaugurated the practice of sending envoys (including myself) to their allies in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe; we were briefing them more than the Soviets at a certain point. But now they started doing that to Western Europe. They were speaking with a number of voices until the end of the week, when they finally decided everything is off the table unless we get something on SDI; and at that point their whole propaganda and political machine geared up to portray SDI as the single obstacle to this huge breakthrough.

But now they also found when they went to brief the Europeans that the Europeans didn't care much about SDI: what they cared about was INF, the Euromissiles. What had happened on that was that at Reykjavik you had the real breakthrough, as it turned out, not on START and of course not on SDI, but on intermediate-range nuclear forces, the INF, the GLCMs, the Pershings and the SS20s, because there it was agreed that there would be zero in Europe and 100 in Asia. They had not yet agreed to abolish this whole category of weapons, which came later. I had to go brief this Japanese delegation flying in from Tokyo, and when we got into Brussels I found there were 20 Japanese headed by a friend of mine waiting for me to explain to them why there were still 100 in Asia after we had abolished them in Europe. Isn't there something funny about that? I think that what I told them was "so far so good, hang tough, we are going to keep pushing for it." And we did and they did; they did sort of hang tough.

So the Soviets wanted to turn our Allies against us and that wasn't working. Shevardnadze when he came to Vienna in the early part of November for the next meeting with Shultz tried this line that "you are reneging on this agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons in Geneva, everything is off the table until we get something on SDI." Shultz just heard him out and then came back and said, "Let's get to work." My sense is that Shevardnadze went there with a brief he didn't much like himself, that he was a good soldier and he put it out there, and then was sort of ready to walk it back, to say "let's keep working."

Unfortunately, it was that weekend in November that the Iran-Contra thing burst in a Beirut Arabic newspaper, the news that we had been negotiating with the Iranians to help supply the Contras in Nicaragua. So Reagan suddenly plunged into a political crisis even though Shevardnadze had made the point about our negotiations. I think it raised a major question for the Soviets as to whether to negotiate with Ronald Reagan, whether he was not fatally weakened to the point where they really shouldn't negotiate with him, or they couldn't negotiate with him. And really that went on for months. Our leadership was absorbed in all of this; both Shultz and Weinberger testified that they had been against it, and Reagan was trying to figure out what to do. That went on basically until February 1987 with the Soviets trying to decide whether Reagan was too crippled to deal with. And just as I think the elevation of Gromyko was decisive in terms of breaking loose the summit in '85, I think in '87 it was the replacement of Weinberger by Carlucci and then the replacement of Donald Regan at the end of February by Howard Baker in the White House; Colin Powell was there. Anyway, you had a team of people here -- Shultz, Carlucci, Howard Baker around the President -- and I think at that point the Soviets said,

"This is a man we can negotiate with." Then the evidence started coming in very quickly, and you started moving toward…there were ups and downs because of Soviet politics…but toward the summit in which INF would be the single arms control achievement. In other words they were no longer dealing in the summit for an SDI result. They decided that INF was really the earnest of Ronald Reagan's willingness to reduce nuclear weapons. At first they didn't believe he was sincere, and at Reykjavik Gorbachev kept asking, "Aren't your allies or your Congress going to prevent you from eliminating these weapons in Europe?" And Reagan kept saying, "No, I'm going to do it and I can do it." They finally chose to believe him and that for them was the important thing, his demonstrating his willingness to take these steps on things that they cared about and, of course, that our Allies also cared about.

So then that sort of put us on track for the summit in December in Washington, for Gorbachev coming to Washington. There was a hiccup in October, on the day of the Central Committee Plenum where Gorbachev allowed these massive attacks on Yeltsin. 1987 was a year that Gorbachev realized that he was not going to be able to bring the Party along with him in a reform program of Perestroika, that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was just too inertial to be had for that kind of program, so they had to be forced. That was the year that they went for Glasnost, in other words appealing to the population over the heads of the Party in order to put pressure from below on the Party. Yeltsin was part of that movement, and Gorbachev set up the Central Committee Plenum confrontation between Yeltsin and conservatives, all yelling at each other. Yeltsin was, I think, expelled from the Central Committee or from the Politburo that day. That was the day that Gorbachev said, "Well, unless I can get something on SDI I'm not coming to Washington." He sent Shevardnadze in with that kind of message. Shultz just sat there in his Buddha posture and listened to this and didn't respond. The next day Shevardnadze was back saying let's move forward; so it was just an impulse. They kept coming back to SDI; SDI was a serious thing for them. But after that to and fro in late October we were on track for the summit. Of course, it was at the summit that they signed the INF treaty eliminating a whole category of nuclear weapons for the first time; and that included those in Asia, it was down to zero. That was 1987.

Q: Tom, one thing I want to ask is about what you might call the state of mind, because during this time you were dealing with the Soviet Union we were coming very close to the end of the Soviet Union. Did we have any idea, not that the Soviet Union was going to end, but the Soviet Union was basically reaching its end because of economics, because the system wasn't working. I mean you had Weinberger and company building up the Soviets as being ten feet tall. Was there any intimation that there might be an end to this system or not?

SIMONS: There really wasn't. Everybody understood that it was a country in profound decline, in sort of very bad trouble, and we actually knew a lot of the reasons for that trouble. The system did not accept innovation, you had capital/output ratios beginning to rise and then spike from the beginning of the 1960s; an increment of output required more and more in terms of increments of capital input. You had demoralization, and you could tell that not just in the people you were talking to but looking around the country,

even though their statistics were kind of shaved. You could tell it was a system in crisis. You didn't see a way out; the Soviets didn't and we didn't. The things they tried and the things they were trying under Gorbachev we liked because it gave people more freedom, and we thought it might keep things going, but that was kind of acceptable because Soviet international behavior was becoming so much better under Gorbachev. But it didn't look as if any of us thought that he was going to restore the vitality and bounce of the system. That makes the ten-feet-tall, the right-wing argument sort of funny, because how can they be so powerful if they are so rotten? But the truth is there could be something to it, because as the system declines they can become more dangerous; they could do alarming and impulsive things.

Q: Lash out.

SIMONS: Lash out…

Q: Their going into Afghanistan could have been seen as…

SIMONS: Something like that, but we saw nothing unnaturally wrong on that, because at that point we thought they were on a roll. But anyway by Gorbachev's time we saw a system in decline and very serious trouble, but I don't think any of us projected it out to the end. The most we saw -- I wrote a book in 1989 that came out in 1990; it hit the stands just as Saddam Hussein went into Kuwait so it was not a huge seller -- but it is interesting to look back at that book, because it's still projecting an indefinite continuation of the Soviet Union, but with lots of different changes. In other words, I projected a kind of division in the Soviet Union between the more modern European-type areas of the Soviet Union, the industrial and urban areas sort of evolving toward an East European kind of situation -- more liberal, a little bit more covert pluralism -- and the southern and Asian parts of it staying pretty much old-fashioned. That was what happened to Yugoslavia: southern Yugoslavia remained very Communist, sort of, while northern Yugoslavia became more liberal and more pluralist. I sort of projected that onto the whole Soviet Union. But it was still a projection that assumed continuation, and that was one year before it fell.

Now Matlock says that he started reporting as Ambassador in Moscow -- I think in the spring and summer of '91, but Shevardnadze resigned already over Christmas of 1990 warning of a counter revolution or something, so you had not yet the collapse of the Soviet Union but certainly the decay of the system -- Matlock says he started telling people in Washington to start thinking about dissolution at that point. So I guess there were some people thinking about it. I was Ambassador of Poland by that point and I didn't predict it, and I think the people who did predict it, like Brzezinski, were kind of ideological so they could easily have been wrong. I don't think the Soviet Union was doomed. I think it could be with us today. I think it fell apart and ended because of understandable but serious political mistakes by the Gorbachev leadership and most conservatives too.

Anyway, very few of us anticipated it, and the important part is not that nobody anticipated it -- it's like terrorism in that sense – but that you can't make policy based on that minority option.

Q: You almost have to predict on a fairly straight line until something happens, because all you need is a coup and all of a sudden everything else…but without that coup it would continue.

SIMONS: No, I remember during the August 1991 coup I was Ambassador to Warsaw and we had an American delegation, a conservative delegation headed by a Reaganite former governor of Arizona or Nebraska, who had been in Moscow as the coup began. They came out on the second day into Warsaw, and they were almost kissing Polish soil because they were so relieved to be out of the Soviet Union while the coup was going on. As I gave a talk to them at the Warsaw Marriott, the Poles in the audience were standing up saying, "See, we told you so, they're born to be slaves, dictatorship is the natural state of the Russian people; and let us into NATO." And I said, "Wait a minute, there are ten thousand people gathered around the White House in Moscow right now, it's being defended by tanks, they are holding firm." Then one Pole said, "Oh, that is just ten thousand in a country that size; what is that?" I said, "It can be enough, so don't dismiss the possibility of standing up to dictatorship, don't give up yet." Anyway, that was August 1991, and I guess it was after that that it was possible to detect the demise of the Soviet Union, but I still think it was just a minority of people who did.

Q: Okay, well do you want to go back and talk about…

SIMONS: Back to the Gorbachev summit in Washington in December 1987. It was successful, you had signature of this major nuclear arms control agreement on elimination of this whole class of weapons. It was successful also in public relations terms. I can remember Gorbachev going out and stopping his car and him plunging into the crowd and pressing the flesh.

Q: I was walking down the streets of Washington and the next thing I know there we were about five away and he was waving through the window.

SIMONS: Yeah, and then meeting with a whole range of people and inviting discussion there at the Soviet Embassy. Really, adopting American political methodologies but doing so successfully. Occasionally there would be a little gnashing of teeth -- after all this is a Communist dictator and why are we letting him do this? -- but it was a successful visit, I think, signalling to both sides that the way was forward. And therefore 1988 was a year of work going forward now on everything across the board. We were two or three times in Moscow. I went with Shultz and I think altogether I was 29 times with Shultz and Shevardnadze in those years. Shevardnadze took us down to Tbilisi, the capital of his native Georgia. I was ticked off to take care of this major dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia -- the guy who later became president, a nationalist president, and got himself killed -- so I was the guy because Shultz didn't want to see him. I went over and had tea with him and his wife, neither of them very happy; so I had that experience; I loved Georgia.

Anyway, things were going forward especially in the arms control field, and there were breakthroughs on verification, the first one earlier in Stockholm, and then being ground into the INF and CFE negotiations. The old MBFR negotiations now are called CFE, conventional forces in Europe. I think of it as another name, but it encompasses no longer just MBFR but a broader scope on limiting conventional forces. There was progress, and we were preparing for the Moscow summit in May 1988, and that was a story I was involved in, because it was decided that in terms of the public handling of it -- which was so important in the Reagan Administration -- there would be three speeches. The first would be in Helsinki because we were going to stop in Helsinki to prepare to go into Moscow, he would speak there, and then we would come out and speak somewhere else in Prague or Western Europe. Anyway, Reagan was going to give three speeches, the so-called clover leaf concept: one in Helsinki to set the stage, in Moscow on stage, and wherever else it was afterwards telling the world our view of what had happened.

The Helsinki speech was really the one I was most involved in, because we kept sending drafts to the White House and they kept sending them back, or maybe they initiated it and we kept commenting on their drafts. Anyway, we kept getting these "freedom and democracy" screeds from Tony Dolan, who was the chief speechwriter and a profoundly religious person: it was Freedom and Democracy and equating Communism with Nazism, I mean all these great things. We kept going back and forth, and finally they locked me in the Situation Room with one of Dolan's speechwriters, Clark Judge -- I think he was actually one of Bush's speechwriters -- and we came up with a good balanced text that was "freedom and democracy" for sure, but also negotiation for the long haul, with no cheap Cold War flashes. And that was the speech that Reagan gave in Helsinki. The way I brought it together was around the Helsinki Final Act, so the centerpiece of Reagan's presentation in Helsinki was the endorsement of the Helsinki Final Act as kind of a matrix for the way East-West relations should develop, speaking for the world. What he wanted to say was that he is going to Moscow representing the world through the Helsinki Final Act. Well, remember Reagan ran against the Helsinki Final Act against Gerald Ford in 1976, and after we got back some poor Foreign Service Officer I think, or some other person who got savaged in that Reagan juggernaut in '76 that nearly defeated Ford and was partly responsible for the loss in '76, wrote this plaintive Op-Ed piece in the Post asking, "Hey, that was then, what about then?" Anyway, he was a victim of history.

Moscow was successful; the high point is the wonderful publicity. Reagan was wonderful in his speech there, which was to Moscow University students and was televised, and where the world discovered what a charming serious man he is as well as a presenter. The key substantive point in Moscow came right at the beginning, and I was the substantive guy involved on our side. The first meeting was just the two leaders and two substantive people and two notetakers, or rather two interpreters who were taking notes. Gorbachev handed Reagan a little piece of paper in English and said, "This is a statement of principles that I think we should sign." It had in it things like peaceful coexistence, the inadmissibility of use of military force for anything and the sanctity of freedom of choice of sociopolitical systems, which means that you can't criticize Communism. Peaceful

coexistence means that the class analysis of history is the basis of relations between states, and the inadmissibility of use of force, of military force, means "no first use" of nuclear weapons, which we've never adopted. Reagan looked at it and said, "Well this looks okay." I said, "Mr. President, maybe I can take a look at it too." I looked at it and suggested maybe our people should take a look at it as well. I told Oberdorfer about it later and he put it in his book.

Q: This is John Oberdorfer.

SIMONS: Don Oberdorfer, the Washington Post reporter who wrote the classic study of this period called The Turn. He quoted me in it as saying "I looked at it and this could have been written by Gromyko," and I said, "In fact, it probably was written by Gromyko." It was a last Gorbachev sort of urge to satisfy his conservatives. I said, "Mr. President, you ought to let our people look at that." We then remanded it to Roz Ridgeway and Bessmertnykh, and they turned it into something that was acceptable but a lot less inflammatory and a lot more anodyne. Gorbachev complained about it in his press conference at the end of it.

Anyway, I was also there with Reagan at the Tsar Pushka, the world's largest cannon that has never been fired, there on the Kremlin grounds. We had just been down on Red Square with the baby, with that little Grisha Filipov, that little baby with the handkerchief on his head in the Soviet fashion. That was the picture of the year for 1988, and I was right in the middle of it because the photographers raised their cameras in order to get the Lenin Mausoleum and the Historical Museum down Red Square, and when they did I was right in the middle of it, as if they were taking a picture of me. The leaders were down in front with that baby. Then we walked out to that cannon, and it was there that the British journalist asked again, "What about the evil empire?" and Reagan said, "Those were other times, those were other days." My hair stood up when I heard it, because it was such a change, and when he said things like that not only was he hooked on it in public but he was serious; he really did sort of believe it.

It was a grand meeting; were there any other hot things? I remember going up to Howard Baker (the Chief of Staff) and asking him "how's he doing?" He said, "He is so happy. The only thing that would make him happier is if I gave him a chainsaw." But yeah, they had a good time and it was a successful summit.

It set us on course and work went on all through the year. Agreements were sort of falling into place; they were never actually concluding, I mean the arms control agreements except for INF; they were kind of left to the next Administration. It was an election year, and Bush was favored and was going to take over. The last event on the Soviet side for me was the meeting at the UN in December, when Gorbachev came to the UN, and they were going to have their last meeting with now President-elect Bush on Governors Island in New York harbor. Gorbachev's speech was astounding, because he offered a unilateral reduction of 500 thousand Soviet troops in Europe, not to be negotiated, not to be haggled, not to be dickered over, just going to do it: wow. You really did feel at that point that the Cold War was over.

At that point they had made pretty clear publicly that they would no longer support the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe by force of arms. There was a lot of turmoil in Eastern Europe; Poland at this point was in turmoil. Poland at this point was headed toward the Round Table negotiations between the Party government and Solidarity which was still illegal, that ended up in April of 1989 with the Round Table agreement on power-sharing, the first power-sharing agreement that the East European Communists had had since 1948. Gorbachev had not yet made the position public, although some East European Communists knew it; in 1986 Rakowski the Polish First Secretary and Prime Minister had sent a memo around to the Polish Party saying that the Soviets are not going to defend us, so we have to figure out how to stay in power on our own. But it was not clear all over. The withdrawal of 500 thousand troops is just a very powerful message sent in that direction.

Then the meeting on Governors Island was very, very interesting. Gorbachev kept trying to get Bush to commit to carrying on everything Reagan had done, and Bush was cagey; he wanted to be his own man. He made clear that he supported everything that Reagan had done, he was positive about Soviet relations, he wanted to move forward, but he was going to be looking at things issue by issue. So Gorbachev didn't get entire satisfaction. But he was very warm; the relationship was obviously very good. He was a little plaintive, he was a little anxious, not begging but anxious.

Q: Was he afraid?

SIMONS: Well, you are afraid of change, and your major partner goes away, and you have another one coming in, even as still Vice President at that time.

Q: Reagan was such a major figure.

SIMONS: I mean we now know there was some physical decline, that it had begun, but it was not apparent in any way during my dealings with him, including there. The final interesting thing about Governors Island was that Gorbachev had to curtail, he had to cut short his visit. I think he was going around to different places in the States, maybe, but at least spending more time in New York, and he had to cut it short to go back to handle the consequences of this savage earthquake in Armenia. In explaining that to Reagan and Bush, he said something that caught my ear: "You know, the local political leaders in the Soviet Union are using nationalism to increase their political power, they are exploiting nationalism to create their political power." I thought to myself as he said that, "He just doesn't understand what he is up against; he does not understand the power, the force, of the nationalist hard line." It had started already in the Baltics, in '86 and '87, and you were getting it in the Caucasus too. You had the first serious turbulence in Central Asia in '86 when they tried to kick out the corrupt old Kazakh First Secretary and replace him with a Russian. You had riots in Almaty, among very sober, sedate people. I thought to myself, "he just doesn't understand it," and I think it was that lack of understanding of the power of nationalism that did them in. I think they thought that they had solved the national problem, and boy, how wrong they were. They were right to the extent that it

was not viral at that point, but in a couple of years it was so strong that they couldn't deal with it in terms of the new Union Treaty, which is what the revolt of August '91 was about.

Finally, my last act in that job -- and I will get to Eastern Europe later – was to chair the reviews that the new incoming Bush Administration put in place, reviews of policy toward the Soviet Union on the one hand and Eastern Europe on the other. They didn't have a separate one for Yugoslavia, but there was kind of a little informal discussion about what to do about Yugoslavia also. I was in the chair for those reviews, bringing people together. Eastern Europe was the more significant because the Polish Round Table was coming to a conclusion, so we had to figure out what to do if it was successful.

As far as the Soviet Union was concerned, it was not very contentious and also not very creative. I think Sandy Vershbow who was the head of the Multilateral Section on the Soviet desk -- he was later Ambassador to Moscow; he is now in the Defense Department as an Assistant Secretary (and in Brussels as NATO Deputy Secretary General in 2013) -- I think it was he who coined "détente lite" or maybe "Cold War lite" for the way it came out. But the Bush Administration wanted to put things off; it didn't want to be forced into just a continuation, and it didn't yet know what it wanted different from what the Reagan people had done. It was not a very friendly takeover although it was the same party. It was very much a time of transition and I think that by the end of the summer the Soviets were a little bit bewildered as to why it was taking us so long to reengage. But by that time I was gone I was off to Brown to deliver a series of lectures trying to capture all of this, and they came out as that book in 1990, called The End of the Cold War? with that question mark.

-- Eastern Europe

Q: Okay, you are back on line.

I would like to talk in this segment about U.S. relations with and policy on Eastern Europe in the late '80s, after I became Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs in the State Department in the summer of 1986. I was there into the summer of 1989; it was three years. In addition to the Soviet Union I had responsibility for Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, which we broke out in terms of what we called the office dealing with it, so from then on we had a little bit of a separate policy toward Yugoslavia. I will talk now only about the East European part, because that Yugoslavia part is a little separate.

Now the story, and also my part of it if I may say so, or my participation in it, really goes back to my years as Office Director for Soviet Union Affairs from 1981 to 1985, and back to the Polish crisis in 1981. '81, of course, was the crisis of the Solidarity movement in Poland, which ended at the end of that year with the declaration of martial law, not the Soviet invasion that had been feared but the declaration of martial law under the Polish Army on December 13, 1981. So I was involved, sort of tangentially, in putting together -- over the next weekend, actually -- the package of sanctions against Poland and the

Soviet Union in response to martial law. I can remember writing a memo to Eagleburger that he liked. I think at that point he was still my Assistant Secretary, and I went back to the Polish crisis of 1863, in which France supported the Poles against the three northern monarchies that had partitioned Poland in the 18th Century, Prussia, Russia and Austria. Austria was then not Austria-Hungary. France supported them out of the goodness of its heart, because it believed so much of Poland's right to liberty; but seven years later when it went to war with Prussia it found that the kind of support that it felt it could expect from Austria and Russia was not forthcoming, and lost badly. So there was a subsequent cost to the French for letting their hearts sing in support of the Poles in 1863, and I put it out there as a kind of just a little warning.

I don't know if it was because of that, but Eagleburger sent me with Haig to the emergency session of the NATO Council, the North Atlantic Council, that was held in January in Brussels to figure out what the Alliance ought to do about Poland. Here we were at loggerheads with our Allies because what we wanted was sanctions with no regression clause. In other words, sanctions would just be applied indefinitely, and nothing would be said about lifting them if certain things happened. The Allies didn't like sanctions at all, because they saw them as tearing up the fabric of relations between Eastern and Western Europe that they had put together, Ostpolitik in Germany, but also relations the other European countries had put together in the course of the 1970s. So what came out of that meeting that Haig negotiated and accepted was actually a compromise, in which the NATO Allies agreed to apply sanctions, but they also put out a list of things that if the Poles did them then the sanctions could be lifted. One of them was the release of political prisoners, another was respect for the relationship with the Church, I think it was, and the other was agreement to negotiations with free trade unions. These were things that nobody expected to happen in the short term, but they at least allowed you to look forward to the future, because if they did take place we could lift sanctions and then move forward.

Now that became important just as I became Deputy Assistant Secretary. Governments have short memories, and especially ours, but I don't. And when I came on board in 1986 we were just at a point where the Poles…Poland was the only country in Eastern Europe that had a serious economic interest in improving relations with the West. The others said they wanted it, but they actually didn't. Poland at this point I think had $21 billion in foreign exchange debt -- that's an increase from $700 million just ten years before -- and they really needed relief in the form of economic relations with the West in order to move forward politically. They had had a referendum on a very strong economic reform program, but underground Solidarity – it was illegal at this point -- declared a boycott, and they couldn't get the 50 percent of electors voting that was required by law to pass a referendum. So they were kind of stuck in needing to improve economic relations, and they started releasing their political prisoners, and that was coming to a head there in the fall of 1986.

So the first thing that happened on my new watch was we were faced with the question of what we were going to do about sanctions, because they had fulfilled one of the NATO criteria for lifting sanctions, which was release of all political prisoners including Adam

Michnik, who was their great bugbear. The people who didn't want to deal with sanctions said, "Well, they can put him back in again; he's not that great." Now, at this point John Whitehead was Deputy Secretary of State. He was a former chairman of Goldman Sachs, he had worked very constructively on some of the Latin American debt crises as Deputy Secretary, but he was looking for another job. He had a long-time interest in Eastern Europe, so he asked George Shultz, and George Shultz asked him to have a special kind of brief for dealing with Eastern Europe. Some of the people working for me chafed at it and said he didn't know anything. I said, "He is going to be our champion," and I started to work very closely with John Whitehead, promoting the idea that the Poles have done this and we should lift our sanctions, and he bought on to that.

And I went around with him on his first trip around Eastern Europe. He could get himself in trouble, because he was outspoken and hadn't been disciplined by all those years in government. I remember he asked the Hungarians, "Why don't you just pull out of the Warsaw Pact?" His Staff Assistant was Marc Grossman, who later became Undersecretary for Political Affairs, and Marc took him into one of those transparent boxes we had, the secure boxes in embassies, and said, "John, you just can't say things like that." So he got a little more cautious in his statements after that. Anyway, John Whitehead decided it was time to move forward in lifting sanctions on Poland, and we worked that through by February of 1987, against quite considerable opposition within the Government. Our Bureau was on board and others were too, but the Policy Planning Director was against it, the Counselor of the Department was against it, and Lane Kirkland was against it, the head of AFL-CIO, who had a very positive and active role as a supporter of a free trade union like Solidarity. Then the Secretary and Whitehead worked it with the President, they got him to sign, we got it through Treasury, which didn't want to lift these sanctions -- they liked continuity – but they made the formal arrangements, so that was lifted in February of '87. Lifting sanctions moved things forward somewhat with Poland, although relations were still very constrained and very confined, because the Poles wanted to develop a good relationship with us without actually re-legalizing Solidarity, and we had a very robust program of covert assistance to Solidarity at this point, very much using the AFL-CIO, working through Scandinavia and things of that sort.

The next big moment came in the fall of that year when Vice President Bush announced that he wanted to plan a visit to Poland just before the deadline against a candidate for President doing foreign trips on the government tab, because he was going to announce his candidacy I think in October or November. But before that happened he wanted to go to Poland as Vice President, have a little spectacular with Lech Walesa, meet Jaruzelski, and get a lot of play that would help with the Polish-American vote. I was kind of opposed to the trip at the beginning because it seemed just so political to me, but when it became apparent that it was going to go ahead, it was possible to develop a matrix for policy that was actually used and that proved very, very useful down the line.

The practical and specific thing was the talking points for what Vice President Bush would say to President Jaruzelski about what we would do if there were major political progress in Poland. I had in there that there are going to be economic results if you have

major political progress, that there will be an economic payoff from us. This was opposed by all the people who didn't want to do anything with Poland because it was still Communist. Martial law had been lifted, but it was still a military regime at that point. Treasury was very much against saying that, because they thought Poland was just a deadbeat: any money you spent in Poland, any economic benefit that you gave to Communist Poland, would be wasted. So it was partly on those prudential grounds that they opposed.

The great moment for me, one of my great career moments, came at a meeting where I was sitting with the Vice President at the White House, sitting on Bush's right across from his friend of 30 years, Treasury Secretary Jim Baker, with a brief against this. Bush insisted on it, though, and I then went in and worked with the Treasury and the NSC staff people who then put together the talking points, and he then used them in Poland. Not only did he see Walesa and go to the church where the martyred priest Popieluszko was buried -- I think he's just been made blessed by the Church – but he also told Jaruzelski political progress would have an economic payoff, and it went into the record.

After the visit things sort of ticked over in Poland. Poland was just in a lot of turmoil, in very difficult economic circumstances. My Polish friends spent the '80s in lines, with husband and wife replacing each other after work, trying to get normal things in these empty stores. They did sort of major things in terms of freeing up private enterprise; you could form companies, you could do some private business. But the whole purpose of it was to get things more prosperous so they wouldn't have to basically change the political system, and they were unwilling still to legalize Solidarity and recognize it as a partner in negotiations.

The rest of Eastern Europe was very varied at that point. Ceausescu was driving Romania into the ditch by insisting on paying off all of Romania's foreign debt and really pauperizing his population in the process. We got tougher and tougher and tougher on him. A great moment there was a trip with Whitehead where Ceausescu's Foreign Minister Totu announced that they were pulling out of Most-Favored-Nation treatment, and I asked for the floor and said, "Under the terms of our agreement you can't do that. That is not provided for in our agreement. Maybe we can suspend it, but we are going to have to work that out." So they were shocked at my legalism, but anyway we did work something out so we still had some kind of a structure with Romania later on.

Whitehead travelled to the area a lot; he did really keep us on the East European map as these regimes sort of got more and more shaky as the Gorbachev regime went on. The fact was that we and the Soviets under Gorbachev were kind of on the same side when it came to reform in Eastern Europe. Poland remained the key, and in 1988 in Poland you had wildcat strikes in the Solidarity heartland, up in the Gdansk shipyard and then elsewhere in other major factories around the countries, because the infantry of the Solidarity movement was really in Poland's biggest factories. That became important after the Communists were gone when it came to privatization. At the time it frightened both Solidarity, because its own younger troops were running out from under it, and the regime, which was afraid of turmoil: it had more and more the sense of the Soviets would

not support it. Until finally in December of 1988 -- this was after our election, Bush was now President-elect -- they agreed to go into negotiations with encouragement from the Soviets, to go into these Round Table negotiations, Solidarity still not legal but at the table with Walesa as the spokesman, and with the sub-negotiations on the various substantive areas. They were underway in February just as Bush came into office.

At that point, we established these review mechanisms for policy toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, which I chaired. The East European review was contentious, but not on the question of principle: that had been decided long before: we wanted both political liberalization and economic liberalization toward the market. We would reward or cultivate good relations with countries that did either. But the question was what to do with the Polish Round Table if it ended up with a power-sharing arrangement. It was contentious because our conservatives said that if they do, it is still not going to be significant, because the secret police and the military will still be in charge. In other words, it will not be really significant and, therefore, we should not reward it. And of course Treasury supported that as well, on the same old grounds that they were deadbeats and would waste any benefit.

But this time I pulled out the Memorandum of Conversation from Bush's meeting with Jaruzelski in 1987, in which he said that if you do significant political liberalization there is going to be an economic payoff. And I went to Condi Rice, who was working for Bob Blackwill in the new NSC, and I said what I want to tell them is that this is what the President wants. She said, "Go ahead and say that we support it." And they did support it. So we got that through, and we drafted the speech that President Bush gave at Hamtramck, the Polish-American enclave in Detroit, in response to the Polish Round Table result. The Round Table ended with a success. The situation later changed because of the elections in June that wiped out the Communists, but in April there was a genuine power-sharing arrangement and later on in April at Hamtramck, Bush gave a speech welcoming the success of it and promising what amounted to $25 million in economic benefits of various kinds. It was tariffs and fisheries stuff and quotas, but it was really peanuts; I mean really nothing. But the principle was the important thing. The principle was that we reward political progress with economic benefit, and that went back to the NATO meeting in January of 1982. I managed to keep that in place as the operative part of our policy, and I think it really helped move things forward as Poland then moved so fast. I was gone to other things, but over the course of 1989, by the end of the year, we had committed a couple of billion dollars to Poland, which were very important in getting them off through this very difficult economic and market transition.

Obviously, Bush went on to be very instrumental in that summer when Polish politics were approaching deadlock. Jaruzelski wanted to pull out, and Bush encouraged him to stay on and sort of hold the ring while all of these changes took place, and he did. When I came back later in the 1990s as Ambassador, Jaruzelski was kind of somebody we liked. I remember I invited him to my Fourth of July parties and he loved to come, and there were Solidarity people, also friends, who stayed away because of it. Anyway, I left that summer to go to Brown, and Ceausescu was gunned down on the 25th of December, Christmas, and in January 1990 I started my course on Eastern Europe under

Communism, which later became my best book; it's called Eastern Europe in the Postwar World.

But let me stop there for the '80s and I think next time round I can do a little bit on Yugoslavia, and then I will go on into my tour as Ambassador to Poland.

-- Yugoslavia

Q: Okay, great, great.

Today is the 14th of June 2012 with Tom Simons after a two-year hiatus. Is it Simons or Simmons?

SIMONS: Simons.

Q: Tom, when we left off you were with John Whitehead and we were talking about Eastern Europe, but we hadn't hit on a place that had a certain amount of pertinence there called Yugoslavia.

SIMONS: Right.

Q: What were you seeing in Yugoslavia?

SIMONS: Well, you were seeing the rise of nationalism in a country that depended on ethnic harmony to stay together and to play the kind of role that we wanted it to have, which was a country that although it was a Communist country was different from all the others and especially independent in policy terms of the Soviet Union. That was something that we had supported since the Tito-Stalin split of 1948, which meant that the Eisenhower Administration, very heavily anti-Communist, nevertheless sort of swallowed hard and decided to support Communist Yugoslavia because it was breaking away from the Soviet orbit.

But Tito in the early '70s, while he was still there, had crushed incipient nationalist movements within the Federal Yugoslav Federal Communist Party in Croatia and also in Serbia. The effect of that was to kick out nationalists but also liberals. So Yugoslavia after that was sort of ruled by varieties of party hacks from the various republics who negotiated with each other, not very inspiring but strong. But by the '80s you started to get the rise of a new generation of nationalists, again, within the Party; it's all sort of within the elite. But with their scrabbles with each other they were starting to reach out to a broader population that was still susceptible to that, not having worked through the nationalist issues inherited from World War II.

Once again, none of us could imagine what happened in the 1990s, just as we couldn't imagine the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Q: I spent five years in Belgrade and I was aghast. You couldn't have a return to the concentration camps of the Third Reich.

SIMONS: That's right.

Q: And you did.

SIMONS: It's that lack of imagination that you are criticized for afterwards, but I think sensible policymakers don't reach out to the outlandish: I mean they continue to extrapolate from what they've seen. Nevertheless you could feel that the tensions were rising. We had an ambassador who was an old friend who is actually someone who helped bring me back from London to take over the Soviet job in 1981. When I worked for him he was the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

Q: Who was that?

SIMONS: Jack Scanlan, John D. Scanlan. He was Ambassador to Yugoslavia and was enthusiastic as a personality, and he was kind of an apologist for whatever the Yugoslav status quo was. The status quo was rising nationalism in Serbia, and you had Slobodan Milosevic who had taken over the Party and was purging his enemies, the Serbian Party and then the national Party. Jack kept explaining it. His DCM, Joe Presel, was also a good friend of many years, and he had a stable of very talented young people, i.e., Political Counselor Louis Sell, a young woman named Jennifer Brush who is now a sort of Western Balkan Desk Officer, and they were kind of in revolt against their Ambassador. So in late 1986 I went down there to try to put out the fires before they became fires, I mean to try and talk to everybody. It turned out Joe was actually doing that job, I mean keeping the young people on board; but they needed to hear it from Washington.

Q: What would you say? I mean this is the policy so get on board? Or this is the way we do it? What would you…

SIMONS: No, we'd say, "We understand where you are coming from; I understand where you are coming from," because I always thought human rights was an important part of what we did everywhere. They were just angry at the Ambassador, and I sort of explained the Ambassador to them, and I talked about them a little bit to the Ambassador, although what he did next was take me around the country to these meetings. These were weekend meetings of Serbs where Milosevic and others in the leadership were haranguing them about the sufferings of the Serbs and history. There was an Orthodox and martyrdom streak to this new Serbian nationalism that was rising. I have to say that I went to two or three of these with him, and they were like picnics. I mean these were people having a good time, happy to be together, happy to be proud of being Serb, and I'd never been an anti-nationalist. I always thought nationalism was actually healthy; I mean it can lead to a lot of bloodshed and extremism, but in moderation I think it's kind of a healthy human impulse. So I wasn't particularly appalled. It's hard when you go into an art gallery and see these bleeding martyrs on the walls, which is what the Serbian

intelligentsia was trending toward, and you'd worry a little bit about it. But basically you think maybe it's good to express these feelings after so many years, you know, the Tito years where you couldn't let it out a little bit and vent the safely valve. I also wanted to get the Embassy back together.

Actually, another main thing I did there was I holed myself up in that guest house you'll remember that the Ambassador had behind the Residence, and there I wrote the draft of the memo that Whitehead was going to use to get Polish sanctions lifted, because Poland had just had its final amnesty that September.

So that was my first spell of grappling with Yugoslavia. I think they'd started reporting more on human rights violations. I think the Ambassador let more of that happen. I think the young people were more satisfied that they were being listened to, and Joe was there to kind of hold the reins.

Q: Did you get any feel while you were there about the role in Serbia particularly of the Orthodox Church?

SIMONS: I got the feeling that this resurgent Serbian nationalism had a religious element to it. I didn't get a feel for the position of the institutional church.

Q: Did you get over to see Croatia and Tudjman and all?

SIMONS: No, I didn't, it was just Belgrade and south and west. Now my feeling at the time was that because Slovenia was most liberal of the republics it was starting to wander off. My feeling was that what was needed was another republic to intermediate between Serbia and Slovenia, and that had to be Croatia. So I would watch Croatia from afar, and it looked to me as if the wreckage that Tito had wrought in purging the Croatian Party in 1971 was to stupidize it. That made it very hard for the Croats to play that role; their nationalism was getting as brutal as what you were seeing in Serbia.

Q: And World War II was not that far away.

SIMONS: Well, what can you say, it's forty years.

Q: Forty years, but…

SIMONS: Forty years without having worked through the issues.

Q: You had, what was it, 1387 or something like that?

SIMONS: 1389, at Kosovo Field.

Q: 1389.

SIMONS: And Milosevic went there.

Q: I mean that was still wrangling for years. When I came through Serbian training we had Serbs who told us all about the horrors of the Croatian rule. We didn't buy it but…

SIMONS: There was something to it.

Q: Oh, it was true, absolutely true, but the feeling about this…

SIMONS: I kept hoping that they would develop a political process that would help deal with these rising tensions, but in the end that didn't happen. Now the next seizure with it was in 1989, and the bad vibes had continued to arise. You had a new Administration; you had a new Ambassador who was going out there, Warren Zimmerman, another friend. Warren Zimmerman wanted to be a little more frank, and he was more sympathetic than Jack Scanlan had been to exactly the kind of sentiments that Scanlan's younger officers had had: that we ought to pay more attention, and we shouldn't just cling to the policy that had been our policy since 1948 or 1953 or whenever we developed the relationship. What we cared about was Yugoslavia's independence and territorial integrity and nothing else. In other words, just the short formula that continued to be important as far as it went, but was now getting less and less adequate as sentiments rose. The Croats were even tougher on dissidents than the Serbs were in terms of repressing, putting them in jail, harassing and intimidating, and it was time for those reviews.

The new Bush Administration wanted reviews of both policy toward the Soviet Union and policy toward Eastern Europe, and I chaired both those review processes. I think mainly the purpose of those reviews was not to come up with a new policy but to anchor or give them time to think about what they wanted to do as a new administration. For instance arms control, as new START negotiator Richard Burt said, was not the flavor of the month in Washington under Brent Scowcroft (the new National Security Adviser).

Anyway, I didn't think a new review process of that kind, of that elaborateness, was needed for Yugoslavia, but I did commission papers on it because I wanted to change the policy a little bit. So what we did was instead of the two goals of independence and territorial integrity, we added a goal of progress toward democratic governance or, you know, human rights in internal affairs, so as to make it a part of American policy to care about the domestic arrangements of the country.

Q: What about the dissolution of the five or whatever republics there were? When you were doing this there was still a Yugoslavia…

SIMONS: Still a Yugoslavia, yeah.

Q: You had Macedonia and Montenegro and…

SIMONS: Well, Slovenia was the first one. I don't know if it was out or not, but it was clearly on the way.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: But war had not yet broken out in the spring of ’89.

Q: One of the things I think that struck many of us who dealt with that area was what we felt was horrible timing of the recognition of, I think it was Croatia, was it?

SIMONS: By the Germans.

Q: By the Pope.

SIMONS: And by the Germans.

Q: …and by the Germans. You know this seemed to be gratuitous, and both these bodies, Germany and the Catholic Church, had dirty hands as far as the Serbs were concerned, really dirty hands.

SIMONS: That happened after I was already the Ambassador to Poland and no longer had a responsibility for it. I can remember sitting, however, with the Polish Foreign Minister in the new Solidarity government, Skubiszewski, and begging him -- without instructions -- but begging him to hold off recognizing Croatia, and I guess Slovenia too, as long as possible. He said he would, but that I had to remember that Poland didn’t want to join the United States, it wanted to join Europe. So he was going to have to shape its policy primarily with that in mind. He did hold off for a while. But yeah, I thought it was terrible too, I thought it was irresponsible of the Germans, but also I didn’t understand what was going on, because at that point I was sort of outside the loop.

Q: Was there much of a debate within the State Department policy people about how to deal with Yugoslavia or did we see that this was going to be a swamp?

SIMONS: I think it clearly started but I don’t think…because as I say we are conservative in our analysis; I mean we tended to extrapolate from what we knew.

Q: In a straight line…

SIMONS: You know: they are going to find some way to work it out, and then it becomes a combination of hope and illusion.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: But remember I left in June of ’89, so this was before the…

POLAND II: 1990-1993

Q: How did things lead up to Poland for you?

SIMONS: I had dealt with Poland as Deputy Assistant Secretary from ’86 to ’89. I had been Whitehead’s right-hand man when it came to dealing with Poland; I knew all the players on both sides, because I had been with Jaruzelski and with Walesa. I’d served in Poland, I spoke the language and it’s still pretty good; even though you don’t use it year-to-year it’s still down there. I remember in the spring of ’89 I had a one-page sheet touting myself as Ambassador to Poland that was entitled “Why Poland?” It gave all the reasons why I should be the ambassador. I got both Brzezinski, who was a voice in these things…

Q: I can imagine he would have.

SIMONS: And Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, who’s a great Polish hero, a courier from Warsaw during the War and then for years head of the Polish Service of RFE in Munich, and at this point the most active lobbyist for the Polish-American Congress in Washington; I got their endorsements. I wanted the job, I was equipped for the job, but then with the new Administration starting out, remember that Bush succeeding Reagan was not a friendly takeover...

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: There were resentments, and the Bush people had their own people they wanted to take care of, so every list we sent over to the White House had a lot of scratches and a lot of politicals inserted in place of the Foreign Service people that we were recommending. It was Eagleburger as Number Two or Three, I guess he was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs (P), under Baker as the new Secretary of State, who at a certain point said, “Look, you go sit somewhere for a year.” Charlie Thomas was another Deputy Assistant Secretary under Roz Ridgway who deserved an ambassadorship also, and Eagleburger told him the same thing.

So I had friends of many years at Brown University, and I got them to get me a faculty job at Brown for a year, and I went up and gave a lecture series in the fall and then I taught a course in the spring on Eastern Europe under Communism. It turned into my best book; it’s still my best book of the four that I’ve written. And a couple months later Eagleburger and Baker agreed that there were five posts in the world that could only be held by Foreign Service Officers, and they went to the White House personnel office and got them to sign off on this, with no names attached. But Poland and Hungary were two of those five, and having gotten the agreement of the White House personnel office to that, they then filled in the names and I was one of them. So I started the process.

Q: And Thomas went to?

SIMONS: To Hungary, he went to Hungary. He has since died of cancer, the poor guy.

Q: In the first place, what were the political considerations within Congress and the Administration about Poland as you were gearing up to go there?

SIMONS: By the time I was gearing up to go there, Poland had a Solidarity government, which was worked out very much with the help of my predecessor, John Davis, who had been first Charge and then Ambassador all through the '80s; a wonderful diplomat. He had actually been instrumental…he was a kind of a transformational ambassador that Secretary Rice could only dream of later on, because he was in the thick of the negotiations that lead to the Solidarity government in the summer of '89. By that time I was gone; I was already on my way to Brown at that point. Then he was there through the first year in which they put in place the most radical economic reform program in post-Communist Eastern Europe, not to speak of the Soviet Union (which was still the Soviet Union). It was a reform program that was worked out with American advice -- for instance Jeffrey Sachs, then at Harvard, was an advisor -- under the aegis of the man who became the Finance Minister although he wasn't then, Leszek Balcerowicz, an economist who had U.S. training too. These were people who understood the market system, and they had strong views of what reform should consist of, and they had the support of the Solidarity movement.

Now the infantry of the Solidarity movement was in Poland's large factories, large monopoly factories, so you weren't going to get much privatization of those factories early on. So they had to develop a program that took that into account, and they put that program in place by December of 1989. We had put together a fund of a billion dollars -- $200 million was ours and we got $800 million from other contributors -- to stabilize their currency and to allow a certain convertibility of their currency, and people were putting in place assistance programs to help out. It was tough because you had immediate huge inflation, 600 percent inflation, and a tattering of the social safety net, which was really quite dangerous and doubly so because the main support of the new non-Communist government were the people who were most likely to suffer from it, the workers in these big factories. So a parlous situation. Then too, the Solidarity leadership to which John Davis was so close had been this amazing coalition, almost miraculous in East European terms, of workers and intellectuals: they were the kinds of people that the Communist governments almost everywhere else succeeded in keeping apart, but they came together in Poland, and that was the secret of the Polish success.

But now this started to come apart, and Lech Walesa who led the whole movement, who was head of the whole movement, was a worker, and they had made the mistake in forming the new government in the summer of 1989 of leaving him up in Gdansk, his home base in Gdansk, where he had come out of the shipyard there to lead the movement. So you had a government that was mainly composed of Solidarity intellectuals, and Walesa was resentful that he had no role, and he was a person who was worried, as the U.S. government was worried, as John Davis was worried in retrospect in reading his reporting, that you were going to get a backlash of Communists who were still very strong in the "power agencies," the military and the police, in the Interior Ministry. Walesa was very sensitive to that, and I think he was afraid that the Solidarity government was going to alienate its worker base and open the way for that kind of a backlash. So he decided to run for President, and to run for President against the Solidarity intellectual who had led the first government, Mazowiecki.

That was the situation that I had come into. It was in the summer of 1990; I got there in September of 1990. John, my predecessor who had been so close to the Solidarity movement, left very depressed, very depressed at the breakup of the movement that Walesa was provoking. Walesa called it "war at the top;" "I am going to declare war at the top." John was afraid that splitting the movement was going to seriously weaken it, was going to make it less effective in pursing this reform program, was going to open the way to divisions. I've now studied the Islamic world, and John was afraid of one of the most dreaded words in Islamic discourse, *fitnah*, which is dissention and confusion which opens the way to enemies of Islam to come in and attack and take over. John had that kind of feeling about the Solidarity movement. I was less pessimistic -- of course I had been less close to them too because I had been in Washington -- but also he had been caught up, I think, emotionally in the struggle against the Communists. He was fully on board the power-sharing arrangement that was the conclusion of the Round Table in April 1989 and the government that was produced that summer, the Mazowiecki government that still had Communists in it.

Q: Mazowiecki, what was his background?

SIMONS: He was a Catholic intellectual who had been out there really since the 1940s and 1950s, tolerated but constrained, but one of those who managed to keep alive a continuity of the Catholic intellectual tradition under Communism. He was a mild, democratic liberal -- I mean they all had a backbone; they couldn't have survived without it -- but basically very gentlemanly. Walesa was a little more rough-hewn in politics and vocabulary too. One of the things when the split came that we started hearing from intellectuals was that he didn't speak very good Polish, which was true. You started to get that old contempt of the intelligentsias in that part of the world for workers and simple people. I think the first long cable that I wrote back to Washington – with Daniel Fried who had been my Polish desk officer in Washington and came out as Political Counselor in Warsaw, and we were very much on the same wave length – basically said "Get ready for a rollercoaster ride. It is going to be confused, it's going to be up and down, and it's going to have a lot of very high decibels, there's going to be a lot of dissension; but that's democracy. We wanted democracy, and we're going to get democracy."

Q: Was Jaruzelski at all a factor at that point?

SIMONS: Jaruzelski had been a huge factor in '89, and President Bush was very proud of his role in convincing Jaruzelski to stay on and to preside over this transition out of Communism toward mixed governments; so he was still Polish President. He was the President that Walesa was going to replace, or that one of the candidates for the Presidency was going to replace. You still had a Communist Minister of Finance; you had a new Minister of the Interior who was Solidarity, but Communists still played a role there and in the military. It really was a power-sharing arrangement, and the question was how to get a gentle transition to an all-Solidarity government, and that was what the presidential election late in 1990 was going to do.

I wrote that cable to kind of calm Washington down, to prepare them for really a messier transition than they had hoped for, to encourage people watching in Washington to put up with some of this confusion, the gay profusion of democracy, and I told them to calm down and not to be frightened; that attitude sort of held.

I remember Dick Cheney came out as Secretary of Defense in December just before the election. I took him up to Gdansk and he saw the candidates, and he also saw Jaruzelski, because my approach to dealing with this variegated political landscape was really that we should be in touch with everybody including the Communists and ex-Communists. I didn't have big lunches for them at the Residence, but I had Daniel Fried the Political Counselor have lunches for them at his residence, to which I would go. We extended out to the other side too. There they had a political party that was very rightwing nationalist, composed of old-fashioned Polish rightwing nationalist dissidents, the KPN. I remember during my confirmation meetings here in Washington I went to Jesse Helms' staffer, because Helms and I had crossed swords in testimony over the years, and I just went over there and said, "What do you want from me so that my hearings don't have trouble?" They thought about it for a while, and they said, "We would like you to invite Moczulski and this Confederation of Independent Poland (his rightwing outfit) to your parties at the Residence." I said, "You got it," because that is what I wanted to do anyway. I thought it was the right thing to do. So short of outright fascists, of which there were some too, I felt what the Embassy should now do is really be in touch with everyone, and that included maintaining relations with this Jaruzelski group that had really played a historic role.

The President felt that way too. I remember I took Walesa on his first visit as Polish President to Washington in March of 1991, and after the meeting with President Bush somehow I was left alone with him in his office, not the Oval Office, but his little private office next door, and he went over to his desk, opened a drawer, reached in and took out a key chain, a personal kind of George Bush key chain, and he tossed it to me and said, "This is for Jaruzelski." So I took it back and visited Jaruzelski, now a private citizen who lived near me in his apartment, and gave it to him; of course he was thrilled. But I kept inviting Jaruzelski to the 4th of July party, and we had Solidarity friends who would not come because of that; there were still high feelings. But I thought the American role was to be comprehensive.

Q: How did you treat and what was the role of the Catholic Church in this early period?

SIMONS: The Church had been important in the Round Table and bringing about the government, and it had played a constructive role. You had a Cardinal-Primate, Jozef Glemp, who was sort of a secretariat man, I mean not a charismatic man at all, more of a chancery man of the Church. They played a constructive role, and I think it was essential in Poland, because you had to have the Church broaden its definition of whom it was helping and protecting, out from just Catholics to everyone. They had done that over the course of the '80s. So the Church in the '80s was providing an umbrella, a protection not just for Catholic dissidents but for non-Catholic, secular, Jewish, everybody, the whole composition of Solidarity. It was clear to me, though, that now that the transition had

come they were going to be in trouble, because they were no longer the patrons of a united movement, the movement had split, you were going to get fissiparous tendencies in the political structure, and they were not going to be sure of what their role was.

The first things they did were to try to get more religious education in public schools, which they succeeded in doing, and to start beating the drums on abortion. So there was a danger. But there was a resistance, and not just from the Communists but from within the Solidarity movement, to this kind of trying to insert religion through politics into society. So there was resistance and a lot of debate, because you now had a vigorous free press, and I think the Church was a little at sea after that. I would pay calls on the Cardinal; I'd take American visitors, visitors from the American Episcopate. I kept in close touch with the Italian Ambassador who was the conduit to the Vatican and who could give me little bits of what was happening there. But from my point of view as an analyst looking over the landscape in which I operated, I didn't think the Church had found its role, and it was not focused enough to be more than kind of a mild conservative brake on the political system; it was not a big major force of reaction. What was going to happen in Polish politics was going to happen whatever the Church did. You had priests who recommended candidates, who would give sermons you didn't like, but the Church was so much all over the map that it was not going to be something that was going to determine which way Poland went.

Q: Now was there at all a Soviet influence? The Poles and the Russians are not exactly the best of friends under any circumstances, but at this point the Soviets had been around for a long time. Did they have any roots there?

SIMONS: They could have had some roots in the intelligence services, but the new leadership of the intelligence services was very careful about that. I had a friend from my previous assignment from '68-'71 who had been an adviser to the Foreign Ministry. I always thought he was a KGB co-optee, but he was very smart and very constructive, and they didn't purge the way the other post-Communist countries did, so he was still buried down there in the Foreign Ministry. I remember he wrote me a letter saying "Only you can save me," which I never answered. So I think there were people down there, but the Poles were very aware of that, and the Russians were very self-preoccupied; I mean the Russians were reeling by this point.

Q: Their country was falling apart.

SIMONS: Yeah, in December 1990 Shevardnadze resigned as Foreign Minister warning of a right turn in Soviet politics. So they were really into big problems that defined the relationship: really, through much of my time the problem was negotiating the departure of Soviet troops; they were still there.

Q: When you got there you still had the bulk of the forward Soviet army…

SIMONS: …in East Germany, and to a lesser extent -- there were a couple of divisions in Southwestern Poland -- but they were still there and those negotiations were ongoing.

Q: Did you get involved in the negotiations? We were trying to help, weren't we, for officers' housing and that sort of stuff?

SIMONS: Yeah, later on when I was NIS Assistance Coordinator we had a program to help build housing for demobilized Soviet officers; isn't that amazing?

Q: When you think about it it made sense.

SIMONS: At that point or a little later on -- I took that job in '93 out of Warsaw – and at that point it was mainly concentrated on the Baltics, the new Baltic Republics, to get them out of there.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Communist apparatus? I'm thinking of particularly the people who were teaching Communism, Marxism-Leninism, in the universities and all. I mean here they were and obviously there were no customers, but they were there.

SIMONS: I think most of them tried to turn themselves into gum-chewing democrats and marketeers; you know, all these people who had taught planned economy all their lives suddenly turned up as advocates of the free market without understanding it. The great joke is the Soviet delegation to the United States going around learning about the free market, and finally one of them said to his American interlocutor, "You know, I understand everything about the free market except one thing: who sets the prices?" So a lot of them they didn't get it, but enough Poles got it to be able to put together that economic reform program.

Stu, one final comment, though, on that. The fact that everything was concentrated on the negotiation of the troop withdrawals, not just from Poland but also the transit of troops across from East Germany, just made the Poles extraordinarily careful about the Soviets at that point.

Q: Did you play any role in this?

SIMONS: Well, just in keeping tabs. I mean I would go around trying to figure out the status of the negotiations and letting them know that we were for withdrawal as soon as possible, and that we were making the same point in Moscow. But I was friendly with the Soviet Ambassador, who was a guy I had worked with, Yuriy Kashlev. He actually worked on human rights in the '80s under Gorbachev; he was the point man of getting human rights integrated into Gorbachev's Soviet policy. So he was a good guy. But we didn't have a role.

Q: Your military attaches must have been out on the road taking numbers off the bumpers of the…

SIMONS: Junky machinery?

Q: ...junky machinery.

SIMONS: I think they were still looking for the strategic stuff more than anything.

Q: I was wondering, was there a concern about the residue of Soviet Army occupation? I mean the Army's bases are pretty awful. I mean I was here at the Foreign Service Institute, and they had to practically plow up the whole area where we were because of the oil that seeped out, and you can imagine what the Soviet...

SIMONS: But remember the stationed Soviets in Poland were fairly limited. I mean they had the headquarters in Legnica down in the Southwest. They had one or two divisions and they had some airfields, which were dirty, I mean when they withdrew from them. We thought it was wonderful because there was a lot of pie-in-the-sky thinking about what to do with this stuff. You had Poles saying this is a great opportunity for you to take this and rehab it. But I think most of the problem was in East Germany, not in Poland per se.

Walesa was worried about the underground but…

Q: When you are talking about the underground you are talking about...

SIMONS: …he was worried that an underground of Communists could emerge, and he had his policy "of the left leg:" you've got to take care of both the left leg and the right leg. So he was solicitous of the military officer corps and of the police. People were being let go, you know, the old Communists were rotating out. I would go to municipalities and I would ask people, "How many of your staff are old and how many are new?" Usually you'd get fifty-fifty, and then it would be one-third/two-thirds, and as the years went by it would go down.

Q: What was your impression of Walesa?

SIMONS: I was and am a great admirer of Walesa. When I arrived he was still trying to get fabulous sums out of consortia of Western financiers, out of finance capital, to pay for Poland's freedom. The first time I went up to see him just after I arrived, the cameras were rolling, the press was there and he just chewed the hell out of me for us not doing enough – "Look what we've done for you and for the world" -- and I just sat there and took it. Then when the cameras went away I sat there and told him, "You really shouldn't talk to the American Ambassador like that." He took it and we became friends, and I was supportive because I thought he was basically right to worry about the residues in society and in government and to be careful about it. To refrain from purging, to refrain from using all these secret police files, which some of the governments tried to do under him. He cashiered the government for sending a bunch of those files over to Parliament in June of '91. I applauded that, not in public, but in talking to people. I think he was a good President; I think he was good for Poland by holding that line against retribution, against purging.

Now the price you pay, as in Yugoslavia, as we talked about earlier, is there is a lot of poison still out in the political system: resentment of old Communists who are now riding high with privatized state property in the economy, while the workers who had suffered to get rid of Communism aren't getting paid and are watching their social security unravel. Poland was going to have to deal with that, but my preference was they would deal with that down the road, which is what happened in the 2000s, in the "aught-aughts," when you had a political backlash that brought a rightwing government to power. Poland in 2005-07 brought the Kaczynski brothers to power, and that was the price you paid for not purging and refraining from vindictive politics. But I thought it was more important to avoid it in the early days.

Q: What sort of instructions or directions were you getting from Washington? Were they pretty well leaving you alone?

SIMONS: They were pretty well leaving me alone. I knew what they wanted, and I think the only time Washington intervened was…well the sequence was that you had Walesa coming in as president in December 1990. He chose a reformist, a liberal economist from Gdansk, Jan Bielecki, as his Prime Minister, and he and I were close. We and our wives would go out for pizza at one of the new pizza parlors in Warsaw, a step away from Communism in a most monstrous way. Walesa kept him in power over that first year of real economic suffering. But then you had new parliamentary elections at the end of a year and you got a government that was more right-wing and nationalist. The government of Jan Olszewski, who had been a lawyer defending Solidarity during the '80s, was much more nationalist and also much more prepared to be populist about the economic reform program; in other words it was prepared to start printing money. And that point was the one time Washington mobilized itself and sent out Bob Zoellick, who was the Counselor to Jim Baker at State, an economic expert. He has since been head of the World Bank.

Q: The World Bank.

SIMONS: Yeah, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. They sent him out there really to warn the new economic team that really there would be very high penalties in terms of international support if they departed too far from the economic reform program. (This was half a year after we'd forgiven half their official debt to us and convinced our Allies, who held more, to do the same.) And they basically stuck to it. So I had a situation of kind of four national elections in all of which the incumbents were turned out, and yet every successor government held to this painful economic reform program long enough to see Poland over the hump. Industrial production started to rise again in April 1992, in other words after two years.

Q: Well Poland too, what was it?

SIMONS: Shock therapy.

Q: ...what do you call it, the hard line, the cold turkey treatment.

SIMONS: Shock therapy is what it was called, and it was cold turkey. Actually, it was very carefully tailored as a program to take into account that the infantry of Solidarity as a political movement was in those big factories. They were anti-Communist enough to keep voting for Solidarity government even though they were suffering. But the program itself was also designed to force those factories -- because you weren't going to privatize them because the workforce wouldn't let you privatize them, and that workforce were your guys -- so they had to do something to force those big factories who held monopolies on their products to act like firms. The way they did that was first to abolish most subsidies right away, and second to stabilize the currency to make it convertible with the help of that fund we had set up. We did this job so well that by the time I left we had turned that fund -- and convinced our allies to do the same – we'd turned that billion dollars into a fund to recapitalize banks and make them work like banks, rather than just pass-throughs for government debt.

The final thing they did was open their frontiers; I mean Poland was flooded with Western goods, and that forced the factories to compete in a way that they wouldn't have if that hadn't happened. But still there was a lot of suffering. When I left unemployment was at 14 or 15 percent. They dealt with that with a Polish version of printing money. They multiplied expenditures on the social safety net: unemployment insurance, which was new because under Communism there is no unemployment; disability insurance, which is new; raising pensions. And they knew that they were not going to be able to sustain that; the budget would not sustain that kind of expenditure. But it was important to get over this hump of the first years of reform until you could get some stability. But that stability was coming in when I left.

Q: How were the medical services?

SIMONS: The same thing. It was too soon for privatization, and you had a lot of doctors who were setting up private practices even as they continued to work for the state hospitals and clinics. So the provision of health services became more and more anemic during these years. It was harder to get something for education: teachers were not being paid, but no private school system was growing up…well, there is a private system growing, both Catholic and non-Catholic. But basically it's an educational system in turmoil, unhappy teachers, unhappy health workers, and all Solidarity clients. So the government was pursuing this economic reform program from sort of a narrowing base, hoping that it would catch hold, and it did. It was starting to catch hold, and by the time I left -- I think it actually changed later -- but by the time I left which was April of 1993, the polls were showing that a third of the Poles felt that they were better off, another third felt that if things continued as they were they would be better off, and a final third said they were worse off and would never get better off. And I said to myself if you have two-thirds of the political system that has to take care of one-third, you're in pretty good shape.

Q: Through your information from the public affairs people or otherwise, were we making an effort to show that America is with you and all? I think this would be very important.

SIMONS: Yeah, but it had to be, I thought, a two-part or qualified message, because America was so popular in Poland and most Poles liked Americans to start with and were grateful for the support that we had given through the years. Ronald Reagan was worshipped until he started talking. He visited very soon after I came to Warsaw in September 1990, visited as a private citizen, and he was received as a savior by everyone until we got to Gdansk. In Gdansk two things happened. Walesa at this point was a candidate for president, he's on his own turf, and he made a familiar pitch for Reagan to mobilize the world financial community, to put together something like a Marshall Plan, a big program, a grateful program. Reagan, as I had seen him do all though the '80s, started telling little jokes in order not to respond to the pressure that Walesa was trying to exert on him; I'd seen him do it with Gorbachev too. Walesa understood and just went on to something else.

Reagan also gave a talk at the Gdansk shipyard, the hearth of the Solidarity movement, and workers were hanging from telephone poles, from the tops of buildings, the whole work force was just swarming to hear this savior: he was considered a savior. It was a wonderfully warm atmosphere, there was adulation, there was admiration and huge cheers and clapping, and then he started to talk about how wonderful Poland was, about how wonderful Solidarity was, but then as he went on about how Poland's destiny was in the free market, and how government is a problem and the people are the solution, and you are going to have to go over to free enterprise and business. The crowd got quieter and quieter and quieter, and by the end of this panegyric to free marketism nobody claps.

But expectations were so high, and I also had a basic confidence in the smartness and the stamina of the Poles and of this government, that in addition to going around and touting what we were doing and having our public affairs people do it too, the other part of the message was "This is your program. You own this program, you are the ones who formulated it, you are the ones who are going to have to suffer for it, and you are the ones who are going to benefit from it." In Polish discourse there is a figure called the rich uncle from America, the immigrant who goes to America -- and nine million or more people in America claim Polish descent – and it's a folk figure of a Pole who goes and spends his life working in the stockyards and who gets social security or a little bundle and comes back and is the king of his village, the rich uncle from America. I used to go around giving speeches saying there is no rich uncle from America, it's all yours.

I think that two-part message was kind of the message that we tried to put out. "There is not going to be a Marshall Plan, there is no magic bullet, what you are doing -- the hard work, the suffering, the determination -- are going to bring this country through and make it not only independent but successful.

Q: What about Germany, Britain and the others?

SIMONS: They were trying to help also. Germany played a major role in settling the frontiers…Kohl at first didn't want to do it, he didn't want to put the Oder-Neisse frontier into the German agreement with the Poles. As the major sponsors of reunification,

compared to the British and the French, we were in a position to point out that he was going to have to do it; and he did it. Germany settled this relationship with Poland and Poland settled its relationship with Germany very early on, and that was kind of an anchor for Poland.

Q: Would this go back to the Helsinki Accords when the lines were drawn?

SIMONS: Yeah, but it really went back to the original treaty of 1971 that Gomulka had signed with the Grand Coalition government, and to Willy Brandt's visit to Warsaw. I was in Warsaw when he went down on his knees in front of the Ghetto Monument. I remember I had a Polish friend who said, "Why is he doing it for the Jews?"

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: That was a huge step forward, a great cleansing step, and both sides with ups and downs kind of continued that process, and then they sealed it after German reunification with a new treaty with Poland, and the Poles were smart enough to see that as really the anchor of their position in the world while they worked out a new relationship with Russia, because it was too early for Europe, you see, in my time.

Q: What?

SIMONS: Too early for Europe, in other words for joining NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), for joining the EU (the European Union): that was not really an option as long as the Soviet Union was there and even in the period after that.

Q: Yeah, this had to come in its own time, in a way.

SIMONS: Well, that was my message to them, and most of them accepted it. There were people who really felt that we owed them NATO membership, and one of them was the National Security Advisor, who was an old Solidarity trade union spokesman forced abroad under martial law, Jerzy Milewski, who unfortunately died before they got into NATO.

Q: This brings up Zbigniew Brzezinski, meaning he was from another party but certainly the outstanding Pole in the United States. Was he at all a factor in this?

SIMONS: He was. They respected him a lot, he was there quite a bit, and he was on the phone quite a bit. He was an advocate in a way that I would not permit myself to be, in terms of who should be in the government. I mean he would give them advice as a private citizen, and since they thought that maybe he was the real U.S. government I had to keep telling them that I'm the real U.S. government. So the only people I ever advocated for, the only minister I advocated for by name during all these changes of government was Foreign Minister Skubiszewski; I felt I had standing for that as a foreign representative, and that he was just a tremendous force for good. I didn't even make demarches for them

to retain Balcerowicz. What I did instead -- which is something that ambassadors can do -- was I would find occasions to be with Balcerowicz…

Q: Balcerowicz was the…

SIMONS: …the czar of shock therapy: he was running the economic reform program. And he was really like Doctor Doom. He has long arms and big hands, and he would go up on the podium of the Sejm, the lower house of parliament, and give them lectures that there is no other choice, amid all the suffering. I would find occasions to see him, we would have a little agreement to sign or something, so I would say, "Why don't you call in the press?" I would be there and he would sign this thing and I'd sign this thing, and the thing itself was tiny, but then I'd have a chance to tell the press how much we admired this courageous program of the Poles. So in that sense the people knew where we stood without me getting involved in personnel.

There was a time for instance where Milewski's deputy as National Security Advisor came to Washington and went around Washington bad-mouthing Balcerowicz because the economic reform program was causing such suffering. So he was sympathetic to this populist, rightwing kind of demand: "we've got to loosen up because people are suffering too much." The Prime Minister, Bielecki, called me in and asked what's going on. I said, "We don't understand what's going on, because we thought you should have the discipline so that a member of your government (and they were all Solidarity) doesn't go around badmouthing your chief economic advisor." He said, "Would you give me a little note to that effect? Would you put it on paper?" I said, "I wouldn't dream of it, because it's not my role to take positions on personnel questions, because that would make it an official position, and you don't need to hear from the American Ambassador about personnel."

I think we did it differently in other countries. The contrast with the way we ended doing things in Russia I think was very severe, because the Russians really felt they were doing stuff for us in those early days later on.

Q: Did a flood of advisors from non-governmental agencies in the United States, from every organization you can think of, descend on you to give advice?

SIMONS: I think they did, and the Poles complained about it, but I don't think it was the kind of flood you had later on in the Soviet Union, where they really felt swamped by it.

Q: Also I suppose you wouldn't have gotten the Evangelicals coming in, I mean Poland not being a…

SIMONS: …a Protestant country, yeah.

Q: …and a good place to proselytize, whereas Russia was.

SIMONS: Yeah, that's right, and on the Evangelicals in Poland, well, the Church was there.

Q: It's all pretty much….

SIMONS: …this kind of thing. What did happen was you got a flood of not non-governmental organizations, but of government agencies who wanted to come to Poland. By the time I got there the Embassy was already bursting at the seams with new political and economic reporting officers, sections that we had beefed up. But Washington was getting the not incorrect feeling that George Bush liked Poland and cared about Poland, and suddenly agency after agency wanted to put people into Poland, into my Embassy. The Ambassador formally has to approve new slots, and in my case I thought I could probably make it stick; he has to approve those before they can come. I let those requests pile up; partly it was because my Admin Officer was almost crazed. When I first met him he was kind of wild-eyed about all these people that were in, trying to get houses for them and trying to get office space for them. So I let the requests pile up until there were seventy requests for new positions in my Embassy. USAID, for instance: I got a very good guy, a kind of maverick guy who came to me in Washington out of Jamaica saying he wanted to work for me, Bill Joslin. He looked brilliant and creative, but he said to me, "I can't do my job without 26 American direct hires for what we want to do in Poland." So I let them pile up and in the final cut I finally said to him he could have four. He said, "Then I'm going to have to hire Poles." I said "Go ahead: there are talented, English-speaking Poles thick upon the ground." He said, "Well, they will leave after two years." I said, "Yeah, but it will cost the U.S. government a third, and my Embassy won't break down in terms of the way it functions."

Anyway, I let them pile up until there were these seventy requests, and then I spent a whole weekend writing a cable to Eagleburger with the subject line "Washington on the Vistula," that's the river that flows by Warsaw, because what people wanted to do was just flood in there. I ended up allowing eight new people to come in. The FBI wanted to come in, and I wouldn't let them come in. The military wanted to send two colonels and a non-com to take care of the colonels, to teach the Polish Army English. I had a buddy in the Secretary of Defense's office, and I knew for a fact that the European Command wanted to close down the old Russian language center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Bavaria, which is one of the jewels of military education teaching Russian. So I wrote back and said, "I will not even consider this request" -- in conjunction with this guy we sort of plotted to do this -- "until you consider turning the Garmisch facility into a language training facility for all the East European militaries," and that is what it has become. So I am sort of the father of the George Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. You can do that sort of thing as an ambassador; those are useful little things.

So anyway it wasn't the NGOs so much as it was official agencies, and other countries were doing the same thing.

Q: How did your Embassy work, particularly with the political and economic officers; it must have been flooded with opportunities?

SIMONS: Well, they worked like embassies work, to the limit of their endurance and enthusiasm; there were just more of them. I think the Economic Section had five or six, AID had four but also a lot of Polish national staff, and Political had six or seven. But it was an atmosphere in which you could call people up and anybody would see you. You had visitors you could take around, and you could entertain and people would come; it was kind of a brave new world for everybody at that point. We had the best contacts, and as a result I didn't spend much time with my diplomatic colleagues because we were the ones who knew most.

Q: Did you get involved with any consular matters?

SIMONS: No, we had to deal with that and I forget how we did it, because when I got there lines went around the block and we had quite a restrictive visa policy. You had mafiosi getting into those lines and selling places in line and stuff of that sort. I forget how we cleaned it up, but we cleaned it up. You just need good consular strength for that. But visas were not the issue that they have since become, because the Poles now want to be treated like Brits and Frenchmen, in a non-visa regime.

Q: Were you seeing a bleeding away of...I guess Poles couldn't go into Western Europe yet; they weren't integrated that much yet.

SIMONS: That's right, you didn't have…they weren't…

Q: So the Polish plumber was not a net loss to Poland?

SIMONS: Not yet, but Western European countries were also not a safety valve for unemployment in times of flagging growth in Poland, as they also became.

Q: You mentioned pizza places; what about sort of the McDonalds and the advent of American products or whatever you want to call it into Warsaw?

SIMONS: Well, it was happening. When I first got there they were selling slabs of meat on the main drags out of panel trucks because prices had been freed and so suddenly all the previously scarce goods appeared; farmers would bring them in. The Palace of Culture in the center of Warsaw was…

Q: A horrible looking thing.

SIMONS: Yeah, that awful eyesore. A witty Polish Prime Minister, Cyrankiewicz, was supposed to have been asked, "What are we to think about the Palace of Culture?" and to have answered, "Not big, but beautiful:" just the opposite of what it was. But the whole terrain around the Palace of Culture was full of traders from Belarus, from the Ukraine, just bargaining and bartering. They then moved them out to the stadium which had been

built with the rubble from the Warsaw ghetto in the 1950s, the Thousand-Year Stadium, and I remember Brzezinski going out there and being just fascinated with all this bartering going on from the East, the people from the East coming in. All that sort of shut down as time went on because prices stabilized. You got market supplies both from the West and from the domestic market coming in, and then you started to get Western firms coming in – Benetton, Gucci, and the like -- for the luxury goods. I once said to one of the women in the Embassy, "You know when the Communists were here you were loaded with money but there was nothing to buy, and isn't it the case now that you can buy anything but nobody has any money?" She said, "Ah, but the difference is that now I know that if I want something badly enough I can save and buy it." That's just a different kind of world out there. But at the beginning it was luxury trade.

Q: Was there the feeling of yours that Poland is the flagship as to how reform should be done?

SIMONS: We felt that, we felt that, but recognizing that the other part of that is the democratic part and that they are kind of linked together. If the economic thing doesn't work and if you don't maintain democracy, that's what the failure is. But we felt that the best way of sustaining democracy was this economic reform, reform that could create a new kind of prosperity that would then buoy the population over the pain and the suffering of the economic downturn. By the time I left that was happening. I used to go around these big factories, and my question would be how many people were on the rolls in 1989 and how many people are on the rolls now? Because the fourth element of the economic reform program -- I mean after getting rid of subsidies, stabilizing the currency, and opening the frontiers -- was to open up entry into the market for new firms. So within a year after the Solidarity government came in, Poland had a million and a half new firms: amazing.

Q: Today, one thinks of Russia and I can't think of a single thing I want to buy from Russia. What about Poland, were they beginning to…

SIMONS: They were beginning to…

Q: ...produce saleable things?

SIMONS: Yeah, and I remember going to one factory which was a chemical factory that I think had produced probably poison gas or whatever it was, but they were now producing lacquers and paints for the German market and with half the workforce. And in all these factories they would say, "We had 23 thousand in 1989 and we have 12 thousand now," or "We had 8,500 in 1989 and now we have four:" that kind of proportion. A lot of the best workers were going into the new private firms, but that was forcing factories -- if they were going to survive, because they weren't subsidized anymore, and their prices weren't subsidized – to act like firms. The horticultural industry disappeared, because under the Communists all the greenhouses around Warsaw were prospering, you had greenhouse millionaires, and they disappeared because they

depended on subsidized energy. The state had held down the prices, and if you had to pay market prices you can't sustain it any more. That's the way the market economy works.

So we felt that market reform and democracy were connected, and it was a gamble. We also felt and I wrote -- this is the line that I had taken reporting -- that it isn't that if Poland succeeds everybody can succeed. But what we ought to care about is if Poland succeeds it means that not everybody else has to fail. That it is possible to succeed if the circumstances are right. I think that was validated in the end by history. For me the great validation was not so much of the return of the Communists the year I left: the left party including the Communist successor party came to power that fall, and then in '95 Walesa was replaced by one of the former Communists that Dan Fried would have at his table in my time, Kwasniewski, who became a very good president. But for me the acid test were the right-wing governments of the last decade, that lasted two years and then were turned out again for a post-Solidarity moderate center-right government.

Q: What about relations of Poland with Russians?

SIMONS: Now?

Q: Then.

SIMONS: Then, well, they were very tentative. They were very kind of careful. They were overwhelmingly focused on the troop withdrawal question. Poland, I think, was a reservoir of trade and economic activity for a collapsing Soviet economy. I mean all these traders brought something, goods. I remember going up to the Lithuanian frontier and you'd have whole streets full of cigarette sellers, that kind of consumer goods trade. They were negotiating on the troops, I think the Russians were being very careful, I think it maybe helped, and the Poles were also, under Skubiszewski, very carefully developing relations with the countries between them and the new Russia. In other words, with the Baltic countries, Belarus and Ukraine, and that required a revolution in the Polish foreign policy approach, because traditionally the Poles had felt that they had to defend ethnic Poles anywhere. This required them to give up that kind of pretension, because the Lithuanians, for instance, have nothing particularly against Russians, but they do have a lot against Poles.

Q: Really?

SIMONS: Yeah, because the old aristocracy was Polish, and there is still a Polish minority, and the Byelorussians to a certain extent felt the same way. So what the Poles under Skubiszewski did -- and there was now a whole tradition in the Polish diaspora under Communism saying we had to stop doing that, we have to take care of the interest of the Polish state and the best way to defend the Polish nation is to have a strong Polish state – and what that meant was that Poland should no longer represent the Poles of Lithuania, the Poles of Belarus and the Poles of Kazakhstan, but just the Polish state.

Q: It gets you involved in all sorts of stuff, doesn't it?

SIMONS: Yeah, you have to have correct state-to-state relations so they don't have to be afraid of you. Then later on, I think, once Poland was entering Europe it became the same kind of advocate for its Eastern neighbors that Germany had been for Poland, and for the same reason: Germany didn't want to be the easternmost country of the new Europe, and likewise Poland once it was in the new Europe really would prefer to have somebody to the east of it, between it and Russia. That is still going on; it's still underway.

Q: What about Polish troops? Were they pretty well disbanding their army?

SIMONS: I think they were, but I think mainly they were kind of keeping it there and letting it decay and deteriorate. There was less and less gas for flights, less and less ammunition for live maneuvers. I think it was just kind of settling into seedy decay, but I don't think they wanted to do a lot of disbanding, especially not of the officer corps, because of this Communist problem I had talked to you about, which the Russians also faced. I think preparation for NATO entry and then NATO entry have been very important for dealing with that: modernizing and restructuring.

Q: That was not an issue when you were there?

SIMONS: Not really, not really.

Q: What about Secretaries of State, Presidents, that sort of thing: did you have any of those while you were there?

SIMONS: Well, we had Walesa to Washington, and we had a whole series of Cabinet people in Warsaw, and at the end we had George Bush (in July 1992).

Q: How did that go?

SIMONS: Wonderfully, and I have to say I helped with that. I was on the radio; I was giving interviews calling people to come out to greet George Bush in Krakowskie Przedmiescie. Walesa said we got out the largest crowd since the Pope, second only to the Pope. Of course it was preparatory to the election of '92. He wanted it because he also valued the Polish-American constituency in this country. I had been with him in 1987 when he went to Warsaw for a very important visit just before the cutoff, before he declared his candidacy in 1988 as Vice President. But yeah, he liked Poland and the Poles liked him, so that was a major thing. But not much business was transacted because we didn't have much business to transact.

Well, there is one thing, Stu, that I left out, which is the whole question of the forgiveness of Polish state debt. That was far beyond bilateral programs of USAID. That forgiveness in the spring and summer of 1991 was a huge contribution to the economic reform program.

Q: How was it acquired?

SIMONS: The debt was accumulated over the course of the 1980s. The Polish state hard currency debt went from $700 million when Gomulka left in 1971 to $20 billion by 1981, by Solidarity times, and then up again to -- I think it was closer to $30 billion by 1991.

Q: How the hell can a country with whom I mean…

SIMONS: They just borrow.

Q: They just borrowed from us?

SIMONS: I think also a lot of German debt. So we led the charge, and we did it with Egypt and Poland: Egypt because of the Gulf War, it was gratitude for the Gulf War, and Poland because of Solidarity and the exit from Communism. Treasury had to be kicked into it; it really didn't want to do it...

Q: I can't imagine.

SIMONS: …really didn't want to do it. David Mulford was the Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs, and once he got his marching orders he did it. We reduced it there in '91 by fifty percent. It was tremendous breathing space for the Polish economy not to have to carry but half of that debt. One of the worst meetings I've ever had in my career with someone in my office was Jeffrey Sachs. He was writing Op-Ed pieces for the New York Times urging us to reduce it by 80 percent, and if we don't we are moral cripples. I had him in my office, and he made this argument to me, and I said, "Look, fifty percent is just going to be wonderful." I saw him a couple of months later and I said, "Boy that was very pretty unpleasant." He just said, "Well, you say what you have to say."

Q: Yeah, but if you are just writing a piece you can…

SIMONS: I had never recognized so forcibly the difference between being outside government and being inside government.

Q: Inside.

SIMONS: But anyway, the Poles recognized it as a great contribution.

Q: I'm trying to think, you were there from when to when?

SIMONS: I was there from September of 1990 until April of 1993. So it was really the trough of the transition, the hardest part of the transition.

Q: Was the Gulf War going on or not?

SIMONS: Yeah, it happened when we were there.

Q: How did that play in Poland?

SIMONS: Well, see, the Poles, their attitude was that if anybody had loved us in 1939 the way you love Kuwait now, we'd have had a different history.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: You know that defending that little country from aggression by a larger neighbor sells very well in Poland. So they thought it was a good thing; they were not in a position to contribute anything. Our Interests Section in Baghdad was in the Polish Embassy. They represented our interests in Baghdad, and one of the great moments that came out of that was that they sent their intelligence people into Baghdad and they brought out our whole CIA station by road, as Poles.

Q: I've never heard that.

SIMONS: Yeah, that was just great. They shipped them from Jordan to Warsaw and they were there in Warsaw. Our Station Chief gave a party, and there they all were, and I remember walking in and joking, "Who the hell are these people?" Because they had been obliged to act and not to say anything, to dress like Poles and be Poles. That, I think more than anything, kind of calmed Washington down about dealing with ex-Communist intelligence in Poland. Because we spent all our time building these new cooperative relationships, and that was really the seal of it.

The reward was Judge Webster, the head of CIA, who then visited. The first night they received him in a guesthouse around the corner from my Residence, which was well known as the secret police guesthouse; one of the heads of the secret police had died there in 1964. I walked past it every day because I took walks sort of circling the neighborhood. Anyway, we had our dinner there for Judge Webster. The next night I gave the reciprocal dinner at the Residence around the corner. The guy who had engineered this exit of our Station from Baghdad was a Deputy Chief of Intelligence at that point. I think we'd PNG'd him out of Chicago; he had been on the American target his whole life. I said to him, "Gromek, it was really a thrill last night to be in that guesthouse, because we had spent a lot of my career knowing it was there." He said, "If you think that was a thrill for you, imagine what it's like for me to be in this house tonight, because," he said, "I know every nook and cranny of it like the bottom of my pocket, and I've never been inside." So you get stories like that.

Q: Oh yes.

SIMONS: So you get stories like that. Anyway, that was an important part of our relations. During the Bielecki government I would do things…one thing that the Poles did do well, no, that was later on, but we were training the Interior Ministry's Special Forces. There were CIA people coming in to train them; they had a special kind of Delta Force.

Q: This is a response to terrorist activities: elite troops that can go in and take care of matters.

SIMONS: Like SIS in Britain, or Delta Force here. We had that kind of special relationship with them. You had this conservative government that came in in December of '91, the one that Walesa cashiered six months later when they sent the secret police files of politicians over to the Parliament. But that same government, the Olszewski Government, had tried to turn that unit into a political arm; they tried to politicize it. So I kept going over there saying how happy we were to cooperate, but isn't it wonderful that you are non-political. When I left they felt that I had saved them from politicization. So I still treasure the knife that they gave me with expressions of respect from the soldiers of their organization, G.R.O.M., on it. So we could do things like that.

Q: Did you have any dealings with the Polish intellectuals? In the first place the intellectuals played the role that they do particularly in France, commentators and all that?

SIMONS: Some, but you know Adam Michnik became the head of the largest paper in Poland and then the largest publishing house; he's an entrepreneur now as well as a great journalist. He was outside the government, but a lot of these intellectuals were in the government. Bronislaw Geremek, who later became the Foreign Minister who signed the NATO entry agreement, was a wonderful friend. He had been one of the key people in Solidarity, and he was head of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. So they were in the system, you had disaffected Solidarity people, you had disaffected working-class people who were against the government for what the economic program was doing to the workers, or because they were unhappy that they weren't in the government. I mean there were a variety of motives. But I think most of the intelligentsia were supportive of the government in these years, although you had a free press.

I remember Michnik's article "Why I Am Not Going to Vote for Walesa" in 1990, just as I came. I think people were still a little bit blinking in the sun of freedom. But they wanted the new government to be successful, and I think the criticism or the dissatisfaction came later, partly from the wear and tear of being in power and partly because of corruption.

Q: How about corruption?

SIMONS: Well, it got more serious as time went along, because a lot of the initial property of the new economy was privatized state property, which lends itself to corruption.

Q: Well, did the -- I want to call them oligarchs or robber barons as they did in the Soviet Union – did they take over or was it a…?

SIMONS: No, but they had property; I think it was actually important. They had started to accumulate it even before the fall of Communism. I think it was very important for the transition because it gave the nomenklatura, the old Communist nomenklatura -- the fact that their sons and cousins were getting pieces of property -- it gave them the feeling that they could survive under a non-Communist government, that there was a place in a post-Communist Poland for them. I think that was actually a positive.

Q: It is sort of buying their way. Fair enough: if you want to get somewhere you have to do something.

SIMONS: At that point the subjection of the economy to the rule of law becomes very important, and the openness of the economic reform and the openness of the frontiers. The fact that you have a press that can criticize and ferret out things, that becomes important. I think Poland did rather better on that than the post-Soviet economies. I was in Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, and they are corrupt to a degree that Poland never got to before the reforms kicked in.

Q: What about the justice system? I mean the justice system in China and Russia today is very poor and this is really inhibiting development.

SIMONS: Well I think two things happened there. They had a justice system that was politicized as China is, as any Communist country had. I think two things happened. First, under the power-sharing arrangements in 1989, in other words before my time, the Polish Sejm still had a Communist…

Q: It's S-E-J-M isn't it?

SIMONS: S-E-J-M.

Q: Yeah, which is the parliament.

SIMONS: The lower house of the Parliament; they had a Senate too. But the Communists in it were so terrified of being driven into the sea that they would pass almost anything. So the new government came in with reform legislation in many areas of the economy, and they passed it all and established a lot of rules and regulations and judicial oversight for the economy, to a degree that no other post-Communist country had. I don't think Russia has it to this day.

I think the second thing that happened was that you had a Solidarity leadership in the judiciary. So you had a certain turnover, you had a winnowing and a refreshing of the judicial corps toward more modern and more independent ways of dealing with things. I have an anecdote here. We had a wonderful man named Richard Schifter who was the human rights guy under Reagan in the State Department, so I worked with him there. But under Bush he managed to get himself a little office first in the White House and then I think back in State, doing democratization; this is in my time in Poland. One of the projects he had was for democratizing the judiciaries in these countries, because he

himself was a lawyer. So he had an exchange program or a program for bringing judges from ex-Communist countries to the U.S. So we had this proposal out to the Poles and we couldn't get an answer; they wouldn't answer. We kept banging on them and deadlines went by and another round would go by. Finally I called the Chief Justice of their Supreme Court, Adam Strzembosz, who was a courageous Solidarity lawyer during the underground years and a good judicial mind, a trained judge. I called and said, "What's happening?" He said, "Well, can I be frank?" I said, "Sure, my lips are sealed sort of." But he said, "What Schifter wants is to teach us about human rights. But Poland has exemplary legislation about human rights; it's had a problem of application, but the legislation is great, we fought ten years for human rights, we are now free, and we don't need to be taught about human rights by you guys. So what we need is business law. We need training in how to make judicial decisions and how to deal in the legal system with the free market because we have no experience with that." Anyway, we got the whole program kind of switched over. But they knew what they needed, see. I'm not sure other post-Communist countries knew.

Q: Apparently they knew what they needed, it's just that it didn't fit those in power. It suited a corrupt system.

SIMONS: Well, it suited a system that had no substantial opposition, where opposition was in-house opposition rather than outside. By the figure I always give them, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia by the time it disbanded under freedom had had 1,900 signatures, whereas in Poland when martial law was declared in December of 1981 they arrested almost ten thousand people, and half of them had gone back to their private lives but half of them were in government. It's just a difference in scale in terms of an alternative cadre of people who can be counted on, even if they don't understand it, to support the right thing. This was an exciting time to be there.

Q: Well you left there when?

SIMONS: April of '93.

Q: Then what?

SIMONS: Then I went to be Coordinator of U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the former Soviet Union. How am I doing? I think maybe I ought to come back and talk some more.

Q: OK, why don't we stop at this point, and we will pick this up tomorrow.

SIMONS: Tomorrow.

Q: Today is June 15, 2012, I guess it's the Ides of June, with Tom Simons. Tom, you know, just thinking about Poland: Poland more than any other former Soviet Bloc country has seemed to go in a perfectly healthy manner from liberal to conservative to Communist. I mean they've switched their leadership there, the ruling parties. What

causes them to be so selective and use the full array of choices in their political revolution?

SIMONS: Well, I think a couple of things. The Polish nation is much like other East European nations: it's of peasant origin, there was not much of a middle class, and a lot of the historic middle class was of other ethnicities. So the leadership of the nation was really kind of soldiers and landowners and that's it; so Poland is not distinguished in that sense from others. I think the catastrophic experience of losing three million Poles and three million Jews at German hands -- I mean reduction of the population by a fifth -- I think it kind of taught the Communist Poles who came to power in 1944 and consolidated power by 1947 and their Soviet sponsors to be a little careful about more killings; so the Poles killed fewer during the Stalinist period. Gomulka, for instance, the First Secretary of the Party who was ousted in 1948, was not hanged as happened in Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria. So I think there was a concern to keep the human substance there. It was a vicious regime, and there were lots of people killed, mainly from the underground Home Army under the London Government. So there was a lot of brutality and killing. But compared to others there was a sense that we're all kind of in this together, that carried on.

Then there were things that did distinguish them: the Church that preserved its institutional integrity and a sense of values, and a peasantry that they did not succeed by the end of the Stalin period in collectivizing, and then they sort of gave up on collectivizing, unlike the Romanians. The Romanians went back between '59 and '62 to finish the collectivization job, and it amounted to a civil war. The Poles didn't do that. So you had a population that had its own property, that was used to using money albeit within a planned economy system, that had a sense of markets. In the '80s when things loosened up, the Poles became the smugglers of Europe, taking durable goods down to Bulgaria, furs and appliances, and selling them to pay for their vacations; the "paradise train" from Moscow to Berlin was full of these Polish smugglers. I remember the Minister of Finance in my time said to me, "Finally all those smugglers are paying off, because they are helping create a market." So there was that kind of extra element.

Then I think -- I talked about it yesterday -- the coming together of intelligentsia and workers in the 1970s into a political coalition under a liberalized political regime was critical. In other words you had a regime, the Gierek regime from '71 to '79, that was selling itself to the West as better and more liberal at the same time it was indebting itself to the West. Therefore, it was constrained in what it could do to tamp down, to squeeze down on this new coalition of workers and intellectuals that became Solidarity in '79. So I think you had that. And then the Poles like all East Europeans were highly idealistic, and maybe they were even more moralistic than the East Europeans from Orthodox countries because of the Church. It was a peculiar kind of heartfelt Catholic piety and devotion that translates into a moralistic kind of attitude toward politics. In other words, people when they look at leaders aren't interested in programs or in policies, they want good men and good women, and they're after bad men and bad women. It's that kind of approach to the problems of the political system.

The Poles had that, and during the first Solidarity period that was just winding, getting more extreme: it was getting more and more nationalistic and more and more Catholic and kind of more and more crazy toward the end. In 1981 you had this workers' convention that starts calling for Poland to leave the Warsaw Pact and various strident kinds of things. As I said yesterday, 10 thousand people were arrested when martial law was declared, which shows the scale of the movement; I think one out of ten Poles were members of Solidarity by that point. But also it was spiraling them up toward hysteria, and toward anti-Soviet hysteria. And as horrible as it was, martial law kind of put a damper on that and forced Solidarity under repression, delegalized – it was not legal in the 1980s -- forced it to be more serious about trying to stay alive, trying to keep its troops in line: it lost half to three quarters of its troops. Not all those 10 million people stayed in it, maybe ten percent did. But they managed to do it; and as a result by the end of the '80s they were ready to negotiate, and they now knew how to negotiate in a way that no other opposition in Eastern Europe had learned, and certainly not in the Soviet Union either. Elsewhere you had negotiations, but only within the Communist Party elite. You didn't have a public opposition that had to deal with a large membership.

So that was kind of unique to the Polish experience, and they carried that over into the post-Communist period. They had developed values that they had identified as national values, but as I also mentioned yesterday the Church under John Paul II spread the ambit of its duty to protect out from just Catholic faithful to everybody, and it provided not just the umbrella for illegal opposition activists but also the vehicle for a debate on values which was moralistic for sure, but it also taught tolerance, and it promoted democracy as an ideal and as a way of doing things. They carried that into the post-Communist period. I mentioned that the institutional Church itself was having a lot of trouble in the post-Communist period finding a new role for itself, now that the Communists were down and going out, but not right away. But anyway, the Poles carried forward these values and this experience of negotiation, negotiation where you had to make compromises, where you are not going to get it all, and where you just can't announce slogans, you have to run a government, you have to bring forth laws, you have to deal with law and order. I think it is miraculous that the economic reform program, which was quite stringent, went forward too.

I described it yesterday in more detail, but it was severe and austere and painful, and a lot of people suffered, so it is miraculous that election after election these governments -- with encouragement from us for sure, and from others, the West Europeans -- kept to that reform program. I think it was partly respect for the election results. In my first time in Poland, '68-'71, Mieroszewski, who was the great political thinker in Paris in exile, said he wasn't worried about the first election after Communism fell, he was worried about the second election when the people who had been elected the first time refused to leave.

Q: One vote, one time.

SIMONS: Yeah, that's what he was worried about. But the Poles showed through this slough of despond in the early '90s that they respected the election results, and they had Walesa there holding the reins as President; I think that was important.

Q: It's so important to have…when I look at Yugoslavia with Milosevic and Tudjman rising to the top, I mean it's a disaster.

SIMONS: Yeah, but also you didn't have - well you had Milka Planinc, so I guess you did have an economic reform program - but you really do need an economic reformer to have an idea of what they are doing, and then they need political protection, see, and that is what Walesa supplied. Bielecki was the Prime Minister in 1991, and at one point when he was on the edge of losing parliamentary votes, and Walesa just said, "I didn't put him in there to get kicked out." So he lasted a whole year in that situation. I think it's that combination of things.

Q: You alluded to a slightly different concern, to America particularly, but how about Polish anti-Semitism. Were there any developments when you were there that you could see?

SIMONS: There were. I think the Poles took the opportunity; they got their freedom in the peculiar situation where anti-Semitism under the Communists was forbidden but rampant, and had become a major political issue in the late '60s.

Q: Gomulka had a Jewish wife, didn't he?

SIMONS: He did, he did, and, of course so did Molotov, and Molotov's got sent off to the camps. Gomulka's wife certainly wasn't. Gomulka himself was not particularly anti-Semitic, but he led a country that had maybe 25 thousand Jews left, and in 1968 the Jews became the center of the political system, it was nutty. It was a whole new education for me in the complexities of politics in that part of the world. Anyway, there were even fewer left by 1989, and as part of the '80s when Solidarity was not legal, you still had a vigorous underground samizdat-style dialogue, and anti-Semitism was one of the issues that they wanted to tackle. I mean they started…yeah; they wanted to tackle this as a major problem in Polish history, in the Polish psyche, in Polish political discourse. So that started even before the end of Communism.

Q: Were American Jews of Polish ancestry taking a particular look at this, or did you feel that they were sort of anti-Polish? Because often emigrants don't change. They change less frequently than…

SIMONS: It's always been a mystery to me, the animus toward Poles in the American Jewish community. It's in contrast to the kind of warm cozy feeling they have toward Russians -- Tevye the milkman, the idealized shtetl, the Fiddler on the Roof sort of forgiving -- and yet most of the pogroms and most of the killing of Jews took place in Russia and the Ukraine and not in Poland. But I think there probably was an edge of nastiness to Polish anti-Semitism, rather than the kind of rural "pogrom today, love them tomorrow" that you got in Russia. I have to accept that because there is no other way to explain it, but that is what the American Jews of Polish origin kind of carried with them. So they are neuralgic about anti-Semitism in Poland, and I think are inclined to take

every manifestation of it as proof of eternal Polish anti-Semitism, whereas actually you have a shifting situation. I think there has been major progress, and the dialogue continues, since Shoah from the 1980s, which made Poles terribly angry because I think it gave the impression that it was they rather than the Germans that were actually responsible for the Holocaust.

Q: This was the movie.

SIMONS: Claude Lanzmann's great movie. But I think they keep being provoked in that sense by evidence of their own anti-Semitism, and there is a kneejerk reaction: "Why are you talking only about the Jews? What about us? We too suffered."

Q: In just the last ten days President Obama talked about it and mentioned Polish death camps. I mean in context you realize what he was saying -- these were death camps located in Poland -- but they have been interpreted to mean the Poles were running death camps.

SIMONS: Oh, instantly, and at a Presidential level, you had this electric national reaction in Poland, which doesn't help because it tends to actually consolidate some of the old anti-Semitic prejudices.

Q: What about the Catholic Church, how is it facing up to the anti-Semitism?

SIMONS: I think it's still feeling its way. Oh no, on anti-Semitism the Catholic Church itself has been kind of foursquare. But among priests you still get prejudices, you hear that Solidarity intellectuals, there are Jews among them -- Michnik, Bronislaw Geremek -- so I imagine that could be alluded to in sermons. I mean it is an undercurrent that's out there. But, you know, the Church has also been trying to clean up its act. John Paul II was wonderful for that and really put the knuckle to the Polish Church.

Q: You had a feeling that John Paul was not just basking in being a Pole but saying you've got to shape up.

SIMONS: Absolutely, absolutely, and recognizing that anti-Semitism was a blot and a poison in Polish history and Polish discourse. So I think he did a lot to make the Church aware of its historic shame, or crime as I think some would call it, although I don't think it has come to that. Anyway, I think progress has been made. When I was there you had joint committees of American and Polish bishops lead by the Bishop of Baltimore on the American side -- who I think became a Cardinal -- talking about the issues of anti-Semitism at higher levels. So I think there has been a kind of consistent effort. But the Church meanwhile continues to push on things like abortion and religion education and contraception that run against the grain of a modernizing society.

Q: Tell me, having served in Italy I would go to the local nomenclature. At one point I am probably a lapsed Episcopalian, I have done practically the entire Catholic Mass in Italian because I mean…

SIMONS: You've heard it so often.

Q: Well, we went so often to things but while there were men who came including the members of the Communist Party with their banners, and we would all appear on occasion, but it was all women in the audience; the men stayed outside and smoked cigarettes.

SIMONS: There is some of that, but in Poland the men are pious too; I mean more in the countryside than cities.

Q: But they would go to church?

SIMONS: Well, they would, and it was national, it was an expression of national feeling because the Church as the semi-free institution, an autonomous self-defining national institution, represented Poland. Also you have to remember that most Polish cities are populated by people who are born in the countryside. The whole natural increase of the Polish countryside from 1945 on was skimmed off into the cities, so they brought country piety with them.

Q: Well, you know, one of the things, when I've talked to people who served in the Soviet Union, is that you get ten miles outside of Moscow or something and you are back in the 14th century. I found to a certain extent this is true when I was in Yugoslavia. I mean have you ever traveled on an ox cart? God, that thing is slow.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: You can understand that life moves at a different pace. But what about Poland?

SIMONS: I think it's more connected to the city. You can find very isolated villages -- I mean they are still out there -- but mainly they are connected to the cities, and they are connected also humanly, because of this out-migration which populated the Polish cities, but people still retained their connection to the countryside, to their families on the farm.

Q: Did Poles do as Russians do, have little cottages out in the countryside? I'm not sure.

SIMONS: Yeah, but I think less. The Yugoslavs had their *vikendovki*, their dachas, but they were more prevalent in Russia and in Serbia or Yugoslavia than in Poland; but the Poles kept their connections. The country is still compact enough so that people will drive out to the village. So rather than *vikendovki*, little dachas for the weekend, they will go all the way out and back home. In the '80s during those times of penury and economic confusion, somebody once told me that the significant price to watch was not the price of meat, which was unavailable, but the price of gas, because people take their cars and drive out to the farm and bring food back for the family. So those kinds of connections continued, and I think they helped maintain their kind of Catholic piety.

Q: Are there any problems say on the borders or anything about wanting to…I mean were there border difficulties or were borders pretty well…

SIMONS: …defined. Well I think there were questions, some with Slovakia, but I think they were solved early on and not contentious. The Oder-Neisse frontier, of course, was a huge problem throughout, and the Poles and West Germans made a major step forward in 1971 with their treaty of "no change of borders by force." The Germans didn't recognize that border precisely, but they pledged themselves as a matter of national policy to "no changes by force." Then after liberation the new treaty was actually recognition of the border. Meanwhile, the Poles -- of course under Communism there was no question of questioning the borders to the East – and in freedom those issues were raised again, because you had a free political system and you had people who felt that the only legitimate borders were the borders of 1772 which include half of the Ukraine and Belarus and Lithuania. But they were very marginal, and those questions were never even played with or fooled with by the Government. So I think Poland's borders are settled and it's not political.

POST-SOVIET ASSISTANCE FROM WASHINGTON (1993-1995)

Q: Okay, you left in '93, is that right?

SIMONS: I left in April of '93. One morning as I was at home finishing a revision of my book on Eastern Europe, I got a call from Strobe Talbott, who was the incoming czar for the post-Soviet affairs in the new Clinton Administration, offering me the job of Coordinator of U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union -- it's kind of like a German title – under him, and he would have a special office. I think the subtext was that he would have wanted to have a separate bureau in the State Department for post-Soviet Affairs; it never came to that, but he really took over supervision of the apparatus that dealt with the countries of the former Soviet Union. Not Eastern Europe and not the Baltics, because we always treated the Baltics separately because we had never recognized their forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940; hence we always treated them as part of Eastern Europe, formally, I mean in terms of bureau organization. They had their own assistance coordination operation for Eastern Europe in EUR, the European Bureau, but as the Soviet Union declined in late '91 and then fell apart, under the Bush Administration we set up a separate operation for assistance to the new independent states of the former Soviet Union, and that was run by Richard Armitage, an ex-Ranger, a man of might and skill and intelligence who put it together.

But at the same time the Bush Administration didn't want to put a lot of resources into a confused situation, partly because they might be wasted, partly because we weren't sure what was going to happen: who knew what you were going to be supporting? So it was kind of a humanitarian assistance operation for the first year. There were a lot of well-publicized flights bringing food and clothing, Catholic Relief Services and the Salvation Army to set up soup kitchens for instance in Moscow. Because things were just very,

very confused in the former Soviet Union, in Russia and the others. So it was basically a humanitarian operation using a lot of USDA agricultural surpluses, sending them in and figuring out ways to distribute it -- this is still under Armitage, still under Bush the father -- and he put together a operation of about twenty people culled from all over town, kind of held together by spit and bailing wire, and by the force of his personality. The heart of the technical assistance part of that -- because you also had a huge humanitarian operation organizing flights of goods and assistance in -- but the technical assistance part of it kind of came together around five brilliant young women. They called themselves the Fab 5 (after a recent great Michigan basketball team).

Q: Who were they?

SIMONS: Well, one had been a Presidential Management Intern, Christina Rufenacht; one was a Foreign Service Officer, Karen Volker, who is the spouse of the man who became our Ambassador to NATO; one was Heather Bromberger who under Bush the son became a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the European bureau, under her married name of Heather Conley; and two others. So they were very capable young women. What they did was they went out and culled the East European programs to see what could be replicated for the former Soviet Union. So it was a patchwork of things: it depended on what we had going, it depended upon what cooperators were out there. For instance, we had a program for agricultural assistance helping farmers with fertilizer, and it was heavily supported by Monsanto and Dow because they wanted to sell fertilizer into the former Soviet Union and would support sort of what amounted to an insipient agricultural extension service. So it was fun, it was all over the map.

The humanitarian part of it was well organized. I had a man in my time, a retired Army Major or Lt. Colonel, who went around picking up surplus army hospitals, because the Army was drawing down in Europe and there were these little hospitals all over, at all our bases, and they could be packed up and crated and given as gifts by American dignitaries visiting the new countries. So we made a practice of it: you would send a Deputy Secretary or some cabinet officer up to these lost places with their deteriorating health systems in the former Soviet Union, and he or she would have a hospital to donate. My man would bring in the people to set it up -- beds, x-ray machines and all -- and they were very much appreciated. Heather Bromberger who later became Heather Conley did health care, and her specialty was linking up medical staff from American hospitals to go into a city and partner with a Russian, or Ukrainian, or Byelorussian hospital and give them assistance, and they would raise funds in their own community to support it; it was sort of a city-to-city thing on a medical basis. So, it was a patchwork program.

Strobe called me I guess in March, I arrived at the end of April, and at that point the program already had its contours, so I didn't have much to say about that. It was already in place, and the Administration was charging on the Hill -- and with the President on board -- to get funding to the tune of two and a half billion dollars for that program. I brought some people in and included my AID man from Warsaw, Bill Joslin, who came in to be an adviser to me on how to structure and run this program, and that was very useful. He is now retired in New Hampshire, which is where he is from; he's a

Republican and started off with Sherman Adams, if you remember him, the New Hampshire pol who was White House Chief of Staff for a while under Eisenhower. But anyway, Bill pointed out that two and a half billion dollars for a world region of 250 million people is $10 a head, so in practical terms it's not much; I mean setting priorities was a very important part of the task. But two and a half billion dollars sounded huge for the American Congress, especially after the kind of penny-wise approach of the previous Administration which did not want to go in there. To get this money Strobe mobilized Richard Nixon, and he was a tremendous ally, because he had this historic sense and saw an opportunity to really help prevent chaos, but also, I think, to reconfigure the geopolitical landscape with the end of Communism in Russia. So he delivered the Republicans.

Q: Well, I think we were particularly fortunate in having people like Nixon or Bush I in our leadership. I mean these are people who had always thought big as opposed to so many others get into foreign affairs from sort of local politics, and all of a sudden "Let's do this and that," but not really thinking where we were going.

SIMONS: Yeah, or why we were doing that.

Q: These were real strategic thinkers.

SIMONS: That's right. I think that it's harder to form them after the Cold War than it was during the Cold War. Also they were people who had had experience with World War II, and that was also a dying generation, the Great Generation I guess you would call it. But, anyway, it was a hodgepodge of programs, and the efficient part was the humanitarian aid. We continued that, and of course you had favorites even there: the Armenian lobby was able to muster 99 Senators to sign the resolution saying "Do more for Armenia." In Central Asia we liked Kyrgyzstan because of the five new countries out there, you had just one with a leader who was not a previous Communist Party First Secretary, Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan. He had been a nuclear physicist working with Sakharov in Leningrad, and when he became president of the country he was kind of a convinced democrat. He later on became sort of corrupt and familial, but at that point he was reading the Federalist Papers. I will never forget sitting with him in a room in Washington with him quoting the Federalist Papers to Warren Christopher, who had no idea why this was happening to him. I mean it was actually a wonderful time because so much was wide open and you had…

Q: The Kyrgyz Foreign Minister was Roza….

SIMONS: Roza Otunbayeva who was then their Ambassador at that point.

Q: Yes, their Ambassador -- she later became President -- and she was extremely effective.

SIMONS: One of the best ambassadors in Washington.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I can remember being taken aback when we'd go into a party and she would take my hand and lead me around the party introducing me to people. I am very fond of Roza. But anyway Kyrgyzstan became kind of America's little sweetheart in Central Asia. So on a per capita basis the two countries that got most U.S. assistance were Armenia and Kyrgyzstan; but we also kept Georgia alive during that period because of Shevardnadze.

Q: You were breaking rice bowls all over the place, weren't you, as far as the European Bureau as your geographic bureau was concerned?

SIMONS: The ex-Soviet space was broken out except for the Baltics, that's right, and we kind of had this separate operation under Strobe, first as Coordinator for the former Soviet Union himself, and then when he was elevated to Deputy Secretary of State he brought in Jim Collins, who had been DCM in Moscow and was an experienced Soviet hand, to run that operation. I continued to basically report to Strobe as Deputy, kind of a separate line of command. But the real problem was the technical assistance side; it was growing, and we had to figure out what to do with two and a half billion dollars, and a lot of it was going to be technical assistance.

Actually, I should also say there was a whole Defense side which was basically separate and ran on its own bottom. I had a charter signed by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, Tony Lake, theoretically giving me authority to coordinate everything, but it had no teeth. What I was going to be able to coordinate I was going to have to squeeze out of the system myself. But Defense had this program called Nunn-Lugar which continues to this day, a separate funding for denuclearization, for helping the Russians and the other countries that possessed nuclear weapons to get rid of or to inventory them and then secure them and then hopefully help them destroy them in accordance with our arms control obligations. For the ones that were left, to secure them and make sure that they weren't stolen or dismantled and lost, that they were safe for the world. That was a big program and it had a whole separate apparatus in Defense.

Q: At that time was there something to keep the Soviet nuclear scientists occupied, in other words to keep them from messing around?

SIMONS: We had a couple of programs just for that. One was funded by George Soros, who saw that as a major problem and initially funded it; then later on we took over part of that. That was designed as partly direct funding through USAID and partly as cooperative ventures with our weapons laboratories, Sandia in New Mexico and Lawrence Livermore in California, setting up partnerships that would have the effect of keeping Soviets occupied. Also, Soviet scientists who had worked in isolation, mainly for the military, had no idea of intellectual property, so they were being hit up by predatory Western firms who would come in and buy up their intellectual property at bargain basement prices. So part of the thing we wanted to do was to teach them how to protect themselves from our firms. You had sort of a post-CIA firm, SAIC, a firm that was staffed by former

intelligence people, and it really did a lot of cooperative ventures of this sort for profit, but also I think it played a protective role. That whole Defense thing was basically not…I had a theoretical oversight roll, but I stayed away from it. They testified themselves; I would go up on the Hill to testify and there would be Bill Perry next to me talking about Nunn-Lugar. They were efficient, and they cared about it; both under Les Aspin with Perry as Deputy and then when Perry became Secretary of Defense they really cared a lot about that program; I think that remains one of the great achievements of American assistance diplomacy since the fall of Communism, and it's funded every year (as of 2012); it has support on the Hill.

Of the rest, 80 percent was under USAID tutelage and administration and management. Again, theoretically I had oversight over this very large chunk. But I had maybe 20 people. USAID had its own problems with staffing this operation. They had an operation within the AID administration with a head. They had an experienced AID officer first, and when he went off for personal reasons he was replaced by Tom Dine, Thomas Dine. He is the brother of the painter Jim Dine, but more relevantly he was the former executor director of AIPAC.

Q: I know his name.

SIMONS: That's the major pro-Israeli lobbying outfit, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, AIPAC. So they had an experienced Capitol Hill operator at the head, and they had very capable people in the management of it. One of the best, the one I found most creative, was Carlos Pasqual, who has subsequently been our Ambassador to the Ukraine and most recently to Mexico. So he had a bright career ahead of him, but at that time he was a midlevel bureaucrat. I found USAID very hard to deal with. They are very protective of turf, and they had to cull officers from all over the world: they had to staff this major operation with people who knew nothing about the former Communist area because AID had not operated there. So they came from Indonesia and Latin America, everywhere, depending on their functional specialties rather than regional background.

Second, it was a program that was different from previous USAID programs. Traditionally USAID sends a pot of money to a country director on the spot, who then figures out how to distribute it. With this program they kept that function in Washington. In other words, they made program decisions in Washington and then instructed their people on the ground as to how to spend it. But I found dealing with USAID a little bit like dealing with the Soviet Union. They were very protective of turf, they were very skilled at protecting turf, they didn't care so much about results, and they were geniuses at hiding information. So like the Soviets. So we had a program intended to help bring this post-Soviet space out of Communism that actually functioned very much like the Soviet Union itself. That was a frustration.

Q: Was there or was there any thought given to having a program -- as I know, when I went out to Vietnam I took the early training for CORDS -- to tell you what you were doing? I would think that here could be something like that again, people who aren't

familiar would be getting a couple of weeks' training about what we were after and all. Get them in the right mode to understand the importance of this thing.

SIMONS: We should have done it, but we didn't do it. So I think to a certain extent Strobe was counting on my office to provide that area of expertise, because I gathered people who did know things (about the area).

Q: I'm sure they were not well accepted by the AID bureaucracy.

SIMONS: That's exactly right. So we found it very hard, since programs were in place and most of the decisions had been made by the time I got there; it was very hard to change things, very hard. So the first year the legislation was passed, and it was a major Administration achievement of which it was proud. By late summer of 1993 I had this program, and I didn't have a very good idea of what to do with it. I mean Strobe's instructions to me were to implement it. Well, here I was riding herd on this series of different agencies and offices who had direct responsibility for it with a patchwork team. I tried to gather people who knew about the area, I got in trouble with Dick Moose who was in charge of personnel before he left as Under Secretary for Administration. I insisted on having a man broken out of our Embassy in Rome because I had worked with him on the Soviet desk, Carey Cavanaugh, and I wanted him for my office. Joe Presel, my first deputy, was coming out of Vienna where he had been Number Two on our arms control delegation there. That was my old friend Joe Presel, whom I talked about yesterday as the DCM in Belgrade in the late '80s under Scanlan. He had gone from there to Vienna doing arms control and didn't have a job, so I brought him back. He went off to a separate office and took Cavanaugh whom I brought from Rome with him, and became the U.S. negotiator for all these regional conflicts that were breaking out around the fringes of the former Soviet Union: Transnistria in Moldova, the new country of Moldova; Nagorno-Karabakh, the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan about the Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan; and Tajikistan, where civil war was breaking out. So that became a separate thing that Joe had with Carey Cavanaugh. In Joe's place I brought in Darryl Johnson, whom I had served with in Moscow in the mid-'70s and had also been one of my DCMs in Warsaw. At this point he was a Political Adviser to our naval commander in Norfolk and sort of on the shelf. So I brought him up as deputy, and we spent the rest of our time there with him as deputy. He went on to have a very good career, I think first as head of our Interests Section on Taiwan, because he is a China hand, and at the end as our Ambassador to Thailand (where he had been a Peace Corps volunteer). Joe later went on to be Ambassador to Uzbekistan. So working for me was not a tombstone in these careers, and yet it was still very difficult work in terms of getting anything done.

I also have to confess I was a little at sea, I didn't quite know what the job was, and I didn't have strong goals.

Q: Sounds like you were giving instructions to "Go out and do good."

SIMONS: Yeah, it was a little bit like that, but I didn't have a good idea of what "doing good" involved. So I would travel in the area. I went out with one Senatorial delegation, I mean actually good people, Patrick Leahy, Tom Daschle, Mitch McConnell, the current Minority Leader. Also with delegations to other places in the former Soviet Union. I visited every country, talked to the leadership, I mean they were there to talk to me because whether I had money for them or not, I was the U.S. I spent three hours with the mad president of Turkmenistan, Niyazov, I spent time with Rahmonov in Tajikistan, with Karimov in Uzbekistan. So I know all these leaders.

Q: Is Turkmenistan the one who has the gold statue?

SIMONS: The gold statue that turns facing the sun, yeah, but they've moved it now (since he died in 2006).

Q: Did you know that you were up against somebody, say an egomaniac, who was probably mildly mad?

SIMONS: Well, all the symptoms were not apparent, but what was apparent was that he was a dyed-in-the-wool Soviet, a product of the Soviet nomenklatura and a control freak. Those three hours were spent partly in translation too, because my Russian wasn't up to direct speech, but mostly on his complaints. I had met before to go over the program with his staff, including the guy that he put in jail and put on television drugged, Shikhmuradov; we went over what we had and what they needed. But anyway with Niyazov himself as President, his complaint was that they weren't getting very much. And the reason they weren't getting very much, that we didn't have much for Turkmenistan, was because it was so totally centralized that you didn't want to use U.S. taxpayers' money to encourage a continuation of the Soviet system. And in response I gave him examples of centralization. I said for instance that we have our first Peace Corps volunteers in town, to do health care cooperation, and they have a little training facility outside of town, and they are just setting up. I said to Niyazov, "You know, every time they want to take their minibus from the city to their training facility they have had to get a permission of the Mayor of Ashgabat." He said, "I'll fix that." I said, "And when they want to buy plastic buckets out there they have to get permission from the Minister of Light Industry." He said, "I'll fix that." (Sound of a fist hitting the table.) Because every response he gave confirmed my complaint that the reason there wasn't any assistance was over-centralization: his every response was 'I'll fix it' by fiat, as the top guy. Anyway, I had great experiences like that throughout the area.

This afternoon I'm going to see Alice Wells, who replaced Michael McFaul as the Russia person on the NSC staff. I first met her in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Our Embassy there had been evacuated during the Tajikistan civil war by the Russian 201st Motorized Rifle Division. They had been taken to the airport and evacuated. Now they were back all living on the third floor of the Tajikistan Hotel; it was the Embassy headquarters and residence. The floor below was occupied by the Russian Embassy, and we entered our premises through a metal detector run by Spetsnaz, their Special Forces. And they were learning English, so you'd go through the metal detector and the guy would say, "**Goood**

Moorning (in a loud voice)." That is where I first met Alice, because that was her first assignment in the Foreign Service. Anyway, that was a lot of fun. But meanwhile what was happening in Russia was you had the confrontation between Yeltsin and the Parliament that October in which he turned the guns on the elected parliament…

Q: …in the White House…

SIMONS: The White House…

Q: …and burned it.

SIMONS: …and burned it, yeah.

Q: I retired in '85, but I was sent sort of by USIA to talk to the Kyrgyz about setting up consular assistance, so I was in Bishkek for three weeks there.

SIMONS: While that was going on?

Q: You know, watching the White House burning.

SIMONS: Yeah, on television. We were very quick to support Yeltsin; there was some resentment in Russia, but I still think it was the right thing to do. But anyway that was a major thing.

Q: Within Washington particularly, did you run into any,,,during the George Bush time there was quite a bit of denigration of Yeltsin.

SIMONS: Right.

Q: This is the Washington thing. If they pick on somebody who is going to be the hero, this is Gorbachev, of course, and anybody else -- particularly the staff people, they knock down any opposition -- and it permeates; it's a bad situation.

SIMONS: I think Yeltsin visited Washington and I think Bush refused to see him on those grounds. But you know, Stu, it's also true that governments represent themselves to governments; you deal with oppositions, but the center of gravity has to be the people who are there at the time. I have some sympathy for that. But that did change, the Clinton Administration was still new in '93, and you know that all new Administrations want to distinguish themselves from their predecessor.

Q: Oh, yeah.

SIMONS: And one of the ways that they did it was foursquare support for Yeltsin; Yeltsin was the new guy, and also I think we all felt that Yeltsin was the genuine democrat. I think in retrospect that's true. I don't think he knew what it meant particularly, but his instincts were democratic, and so I think across the range of choice

he was the best guy we had. Whether we should have been so foursquare and so quick, maybe that's something you could argue about. Anyway, it was a major crisis for the Russians and for our policy as well.

Then in December came the parliamentary elections, under a kind of a funny rigged system. Some seats were individual seats; others were drawn from party lists. But there was a huge vote for this off-the-wall Russian nationalist Zhirinovsky. He was anti-foreign, probably anti-Semitic, and certainly anti-democratic: and that came as a shock to the whole system. Then you had a referendum on a new constitution that basically neutered a lot of the political system in favor of Yeltsin's presidency. It was a mixed constitution -- there were a lot of democratic elements in it -- but it was still basically a presidential constitution in the wake of the confrontation with parliament.

We continued to support Yeltsin, but meanwhile I remember going with Al Gore as Vice President on his trip to Central Asia, and we were there as the Russian election results were coming in in December 1993, and his reaction was very interesting. It was an old American populist reaction of "too much shock and not enough therapy." In other words he accepted the argument that we were tasking the Russians to do too much. Of course, I had been to Poland, so I wasn't sympathetic to it, because I thought we weren't asking them to do enough, and they weren't willing to do enough. Maybe they weren't equipped to do enough; I accepted that. Anyway, Gore's reaction was this "Let's try to be kinder to them," which I don't think was the right policy prescription.

I think people felt that about me, so I was never in opposition within the Administration, or never led any charges, but I think there was a feeling that I was not on the same wavelength in terms of supporting Yeltsin and everything else out there. I think the big mistake I made was in a choice of two delegations that were going there at the same time, and I chose one with Ron Brown that ended up in the Urals, rather than going with Dick Gephardt who was the Majority Leader of the House.

Q: Ron Brown was Secretary of Commerce.

SIMONS: Secretary of Commerce at that point. I had a great time with him, we were well received, but I think I should probably have been with Gephardt, because in March or April of that year Strobe called me up to his office and told me I had been fired: just fortunes of war, he said, you're a victim of the Zhirinovsky election. I think what he meant, although it was never explained in detail…

Q: Zhirinovsky was the…

SIMONS: …the Russian nationalist who had gotten 25 percent of the vote...

Q: ...nationalist, yeah.

SIMONS: …in December. I think what that meant, although it's never been spelled out to me, was that the people whom the Administration had depended on to pass this two-and-

a-half billion dollar assistance program were asking why after they had been so munificent the Russians were still voting for fascists, and why I hadn't prevented that or why their program had not prevented Russia from…

Q: Was there a political element to your program that was essentially overt or was it effective or not?

SIMONS: It was all overt, but it was just ramping up. It had not had time to be effective.

Q: And also a program like that does not necessarily get to the soul of the Russian people. I mean it's…

SIMONS: But if you are a Congressman, you give all this money and it doesn't work and you need a scapegoat. They needed the sacrificial lamb and I was the guy. My reaction however, I think it surprised Strobe, was, "That's terrific and let me help you find my successor. Let me think about who should be my successor and let me give you some advice and let me go talk to them and explain the job to them." It's a Democratic Administration, which means that they are basically kindhearted and they want people to like each other, and they don't like infighting, so I think Strobe was very relieved at my reaction. So I started going around town, because candidates sure enough popped up when it became known the job was open, and at a certain point it got into Al Kamen's "In the Loop" column on the Post Federal Page. One of the candidates was Jim Wolfensohn, who was the head of the Kennedy Center at the time. I went over and explained to him privately what the job entailed, and he kind of disappeared from the candidates list.

Among the others there was a former insurance commissioner from California who had been a Democratic operative and popped up on the horizon. At that point I went to Strobe and I said, "This is going to be a killer, because it's going to confirm that I'm being fired not for incompetence but for something else, because if you are going to put an incompetent in behind me, it means that something else is in play." So at Strobe's suggestion I got seven minutes with Warren Christopher, and it was the most crystallized presentation I ever made in my life, about why this would be a wrong choice. He looked up and thanked me for explaining the situation to him, and that guy then disappeared from the screen too. But it took a political decision, and Christopher is from California, so I think he had a way to think with that. But in any case I remained in place because they couldn't find a successor, and I remained in place for another year. And the truth is that I got better, because I discovered things that I thought ought to be done with the program.

The first happened as Yeltsin was going to visit Washington that fall of 1994. This was the spring, I was still in place, the program was falling into place; things were starting to happen on the technical assistance side. The humanitarian side continued, the health side continued as before, and I think things were starting to get in gear on the technical assistance side. But Yeltsin was coming and we needed to figure out what we were going to tell him. At that point a light went on in my head, which was that over time we were not going to be able to sustain this kind of a program with Russia. It was a program of

assistance of a kind we give to less developed countries, and we were giving it to a big power, terribly organized and turbulent and in trouble, but still a great power with a lot of pride. We weren't going to be able to sustain a program like this and we ought to start to move now toward putting more funding into trade and investment support, because over time our economic relationship with Russia was going to be in trade and investment and not in assistance. They weren't going to put up with assistance for very long.

Meanwhile, I was writing strategy papers for the annual reports we had to send to Congress, and I kept saying the program with Russia should cease to be funded in Fiscal '98, because if it hasn't done what it was supposed to do by then you shouldn't keep throwing money after it. I testified to that up on the Hill, and Lee Hamilton looked down at me -- he was still with the International Affairs Committee -- and said, "Tom, you don't really believe that is going to happen, do you?" I said, "Oh yes, Mr. Congressman, I certainly do." But I knew it should happen, and I knew we should be getting out of the assistance business with Russia and with whichever other countries were doing fairly well by that time, as soon as we could.

But that provoked a huge fight within the Administration, because USAID didn't want to give up any money out of the programs it controlled, which was what was required in order to transfer it to the agencies which did trade and investment support: OPIC, Commerce, Treasury. So in the fall of that year I provoked a confrontation between myself and Brian Atwood, who was the USAID Administrator, a good man and a seasoned Democratic political operative to the point where he couldn't get confirmed as Ambassador to Brazil, although that was further on down the road.

Q: I've just finished talking to somebody who worked in USIA when it was being eliminated, saying Jesse Helms, Senator from South Carolina…

SIMONS: North Carolina.

Q: …North Carolina, that he wanted to get rid of USAID but he couldn't, so he got rid of USIA, and Atwood was just too good.

SIMONS: He is very tough, so it is not an easy fight and Strobe just did not want to make a decision, because he doesn't like fights in the family. But I kept provoking the decision, we had the deadline of the Yeltsin visit, we had to figure out what to say. My proposal was that we tell Yeltsin we are going to give $100 million new dollars to trade and investment support because that's the way we see it.

Q: When you say trade and investment, what do you mean?

SIMONS: Supporting OPIC, the guarantees of investment there; you can do some technical assistance in setting up stock markets and tariff reform and things of that sort; but it's basically supporting American traders who want to trade there. Treasury ran a program of ex-bankers who went out to advise banks on how to become banks, because

all Soviet banks were basically pass-throughs for government paper out into the economy; and also just to mark a new direction.

Q: I'm pretty well removed from the whole business, but looking at the way things are today, Russia is basically the equivalent of Saudi Arabia with lots of oil, and I can't think of anything that I would buy from Russia. I mean this is what you are trying to promote.

SIMONS: Well, you figure that if you have a rule of law, you have American firms who will go in and will produce things either for the Russian market or for export. You know Mars went in there and set up a factory outside of Moscow. In the course of working with this -- because I knew the lawyer who represents them, and they actually tried to get my program to buy a lot of product as a nutritional supplement, which I wouldn't do, so they are clever businessmen too -- but they've invested in this thing outside Moscow, and I discovered in working that issue that they became great during the Depression here, Mars bars and then Snickers and that whole line of products, because it is poor people's food: it is quick energy for people who don't have much money. And so they saw an opportunity, and I think they made an opportunity in Russia, but that's also something you can export elsewhere, out of Russia to the Arab world, for instance.

Anyway, while trying to get that going, it's true Russia remains a colonial economy. They export raw materials and import manufactures still, but part of it is because they don't have rule of law for investment. People don't want to invest there because they are going to have their investments stolen by the crooked…

Q: That remains a major issue, you can't really invest.

SIMONS: That's right, that's right, they would prefer to control; unlike Poland, for instance.

Q: Yeah. Well, tell me about -- sort of as an aside -- dealing with Armenia. If you want to deal with Armenia you've got to walk the streets of Glendale, California, with me. I mean the politics of Nancy Pelosi; the Armenian clout is just incredible.

SIMONS: Second only to the Jewish, and using a lot of the same methodology. No, no, we wanted to stay on the good side of the Armenians; and I think the highest per capita draw on our resources was Armenia.

Q: What was being done there?

SIMONS: Well, food, a lot of food and agricultural goods support; but we were also helping them clean up a nuclear power plant because we wanted them to close it. They did close it, and now they've reopened it with Russian help since then. I don't know, I'm not sure what other kinds of technical assistance that we had in there, but I think assistance for government reform. I know in the Ukraine we spent a lot of time helping to reform the National Bank. The head of it then, Yushchenko, became President of the

country later on. So I'm not sure what the details of the Armenian program were, but it was big in per capita terms.

The Armenians loved us because they were destitute. You go into Yerevan and you have to pour the water you are going to shave with the next morning into the bathtub at night, because in the morning there isn't going to be any. So it was that kind of situation. I can remember they had a wonderful Prime Minister who spoke a little bit of English. He had been an economist in Moscow. I remember him looking at me and saying, "Meester Saimons, we both know your job is to give me as leetle as possible, and my job is to get as much as possible from you." But they also had a very serious economic reform program in terms of management; it was on par with the Polish program in terms of the expertise they had about understanding the market and what it took to create a market, and we supported that too. We supported this economy.

Q: The Armenians basically like some other groups were born with the souls of a salesman.

SIMONS: Traders, yeah.

Q: Traders.

SIMONS: But, as you say, they are very close to the American community, which is very hardnosed. I think the Petroleum Minister was an American; I think they had a couple of ministers who were dual citizens, which the Poles never did. Anyway, it was a close relationship, and it was a harmonious relationship, and actually I am proud of what we did and maybe the pushing helped a little bit in terms of why reform worked as well as it did.

Q: How about Moldova?

SIMONS: Moldova was just such a mess at that time and so fraught with their civil war that there wasn't much we felt we could do for them. We did some technical assistance in terms of tax reform, we sent in some of these experts to help them with tax reform and legal and judicial reform. I remember I was there when a World Bank team was there that was headed by a former Romanian president, helping them tinker out reforms to create a market economy. We didn't put much into Moldova at that point, just as we didn't put much into Tajikistan because they had a civil war too; it's sort of wasted money. What we did do in Tajikistan was help the Aga Khan Foundation. It came to us or the Aga Khan people came to us, because the whole most remote part of Tajikistan is populated by Ismailis, the Muslim Shia sect of which the Aga Khan is the world leader. They wanted us to help get a dynamo going. There had been a dynamo or two generators of a dynamo that supplied most of the electricity out there, and it had stopped. Either they didn't know how to run it or they didn't have any spare parts. So we funded the Aga Khan for rehabilitating that dynamo and creating new electricity for that remote part of Tajikistan that had managed to remain outside the civil war. That's a small investment, but it drew an immediate payoff.

On the biggest issue, however, of transferring the $100 million from USAID-managed technical assistance programs to trade and investment support, in the end people kept coming to Strobe saying, "If you don't do this Tom's office will be discredited forever." I mean it became kind of a "to be or not to be" for the Office of Coordinator and therefore for my successor (because at some point I was going to be replaced). Strobe choked, but he did the right thing, and so when Yeltsin came it was a pleasure to be in the (White House) room and hear -- I forget who did the announcing -- but it was announced that we were going to put an additional $100 million into trade and investment as a new direction in relations with Russia. So that was kind of an achievement.

At that point we continued to look for a successor, but I developed a second creative strand or idea, if I could call it that, which was we should really start putting more support into countries on Russia's periphery in order to enhance their viability vis-à-vis Russia. That meant Ukraine, Belarus -- strange as it may seem under what Condi Rice later called Europe's last dictatorship, Lukashenka's, but he had not emerged yet as the kind of monster he has become -- and Georgia. So I started and was very much encouraged by Larry Summers at Treasury; Bill Perry was supportive too; and I started doing dog and pony shows around those countries sort of encouraging them in the right direction and shifting some funds. I was able to do a little fund shifting at that point toward the end. Strobe was very suspicious. I said, "This will help Russia," and he said, "Would you explain that?" I said, "It will help Russia because it will reduce the Russian temptation to fiddle with these countries in order to dominate them again." He sort of swallowed that, but he didn't like that.

Finally, in April…

Q: In April 1994?

SIMONS: In April of '95 they found a successor, a man who had been very strong in the finance operation of the DNC (the Democratic National Committee), himself an investor, Richard Morningstar. He had been Deputy at OPIC, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the investment support outfit in the U.S. government that was run by Ruth Harkin, wife of Senator Tom Harkin, herself a lawyer. It was a very good operation and it had been expanding in our area, partly with our support -- that's where part of the money that we announced to Yeltsin went -- and so they were supportive of me because I was the supporting them. So my successor was her deputy, Richard Morningstar. (Dick later went on to be Ambassador to the EU in Brussels, and then under Obama negotiator for Caspian energy and Ambassador to Azerbaijan). He came on board in April.

PAKISTAN II: 1996-1998

SIMONS: I went off into the…not into the wilderness, because I think people felt badly about what had happened to me, so they were eager to find me a dignified job.

Q: I almost want to say remarkable, but I mean it shows that there is maybe some heart…

SIMONS: I'm sure there is heart in these things. I can remember the sadness with what happened to Steve Solarz: they wanted to send Congressman Steve Solarz to India, and he wanted to go, but he was then tripped up by his wife's kleptomania there at that bank on Capitol Hill. They did make him head of one of my enterprise funds. One of the parts of the program was these enterprise funds, which were small loan windows for new entrepreneurs in these various countries; they made him head of a new Central Asian fund. He spent some time trying to get me to guarantee him against suits for corruption. I said, "I couldn't do that Steve, you are out there, you've got to take some risks;" it was the darndest thing. Anyway, they felt bad that he couldn't go to India.

For Delhi they then got a very distinguished diplomat, Frank Wisner, who at one point at the end of the last administration had been Acting Secretary for a couple of days. But anyway, they felt bad about me, and they wanted to give me a dignified job, just not in my main areas of expertise, this post-Communist part of the world. So they came up with Pakistan. I think partly because they wanted a counterweight to Wisner, who is a very powerful advocate and could be counted on to become a very powerful advocate for India. They wanted somebody to maintain a balance in terms of policy advocacy there. I had been a boy in Pakistan, my father was in our first Embassy, and I spent my years between nine and ten in Karachi Grammar School when Karachi was then the capital. I had a wonderful experience with it, and I associated Pakistan's liberation with my own, because I had the run of Karachi, which was then a city of 400 thousand -- it is now 14 million – on my bicycle. Those 400 thousand were surrounded by refugee camps with another 400 thousand of Muslims from India, but it was perfectly safe. I went all over the place and had the run of the place. So I associated my personal liberation as a boy with Pakistan's and had good feelings toward Pakistan and accepted the job.

Q: Was Pakistan...let's see we are talking about '94…

SIMONS: '94-'95.

Q: I mean today Pakistan is considered a dangerous place but also a very crucial spot.

SIMONS: Then it was less of both.

Q: We were really thinking of Pakistan and India and trying to keep these two from going at each other. Was that it?

SIMONS: That was it, but that was also not much of a danger at the time. India had come to the limits of what socialist economic management could do, and it almost went bankrupt in 1990: they had to send their gold reserves to London in order to keep borrowing. So they embarked on a really major economic reform program under the Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who is now the Prime Minister. So India was very self-absorbed with its own transformation. Meanwhile its main outside sponsor and partner, which was the Soviet Union, just disappeared. With Pakistan we had together fought the war in Afghanistan, and when the Soviets withdrew in February of '89, the

Pakistani establishment was swept with kind of a feeling that Islam had the wind in its sails historically. That summer an insurrection broke out in Indian-held Kashmir because of Indian mismanagement. So Pakistan started transferring resources from Afghanistan into Kashmir to support that, and they kind of tweaked up their nuclear program too. With the Soviets out of Afghanistan we no longer had much incentive to wink at that nuclear program, so in October 1990 we simply cancelled what was then the third largest assistance program in the world, after Israel and Egypt. We ran out the pipeline -- that was still running out by the time I got there -- but basically we left Pakistan at home alone. Because of those sanctions with a nonproliferation basis, by the time I got there we had active aid programs of $9 million, peanuts; so we didn't much care.

Q: What?

SIMONS: We didn't care. We cared about the nuclear program, the covert nuclear weapons program. You had crises in India-Pakistan relations, military movements, and in one of them Bob Gates as Deputy National Security Advisor went out there to tell the two sides what the others were doing and get that under control. That worked. But they basically weren't picking fights with each other at that point. I think you had a rogue Indian Chief of Army staff who wanted to provoke the Pakistanis. It was before my time. Anyway, once you were past that, the two countries were very self-absorbed and not listening to the outside world.

Q: At the time you were getting ready to go out there was fundamentalist Islamism considered a threat or not, or was this just…

SIMONS: No, it was not. We knew it was a problem, I mean, we had had our Iran hostages, you had the Palestinian terrorists of the '70, Carlos the Jackal and people like that, and in fighting the Afghanistan war we basically turned over the running of it to the Pakistanis, and we knew they had run it as a jihad. There were seven resistance groups based in Peshawar, and they put the bulk of their assistance to the most extreme of them, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was going to be their champion in a free Afghanistan. Well, that didn't work out. Instead they had a civil war after the Soviets left, but by then we had pulled all our assets out of Afghanistan. By the time I got there we had none. But we also didn't consider these Islamists a major threat. The target of our intelligence operations there was there nuclear program, that's what we were after, and that's what we wanted to follow and keep tabs on. We had people designated to follow Afghanistan and we had people watching and listening for terrorism, but it was not the bulk of the program. We were after Mir Aimal Kansi, who was the sort of unbalanced Pakistani student who had gone and shot up the entrance of the CIA headquarters…

Q: Shot up the entrance of the CIA headquarters outside of Langley?

SIMONS: Outside of Langley.

Q: This was just a guy.

SIMONS: A guy, that's right, that was a target for us; we were trying to follow him and figure how to get him. We got him in my time because his handlers got tired of him and came in for the reward; but that was later on. So those were the things we cared about in Pakistan. I will get into it next time -- I'm tired now -- into the dilemmas of trying to do policy in a big strategically located country that we don't care much about.

Q: I mean these things are like wildfire also, they flare up.

SIMONS: Yes, that's right. I found it very hard to convince Washington…my task as Ambassador was really finding new reasons to care about Pakistan now that the Cold War was over.

Q: Okay, well this is a good place to stop.

SIMONS: I think so.

Q: OK. Let's see. Today is the 12th of April, 2013, with Tom Simons. Tom, we figured out you were in Pakistan from when to when?

SIMONS: From January of '96 to August of '98.

Q: Now, I'm not quite sure exactly. We probably may repeat, but where do you think we should pick up from there?

SIMONS: Well, I think we should talk a little bit about the problematic where we ended up before. I explained why I was sent. I'd been there as a boy, they wanted somebody to -- I think to stand up a little bit to Frank Wisner, who was the Ambassador in Delhi, traditionally --

Q: Sometimes the clash of wills between New Delhi and…

SIMONS:…Islamabad is traditional.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: I mean there's a traditional danger of clientism. Frank and I worked very hard once I got there to deal with that, and I think successfully. But he was a powerful figure. And I think they had a feeling that they would like somebody out there who could *(laughs)…*who could create balance in our approach to the Subcontinent, as between India and Pakistan. Because I'd been there as a boy too. That was an additional benefit. My Dad was in the first Embassy. And that turned out to be a benefit in Pakistan, because they did feel that I was favorably inclined because I'd been there young. I mean Pakistan is a very class-conscious society, and that's reflected in government. So most Pakistanis were convinced that I'd been born there, that my father had been Ambassador -- whereas actually he was a Second Secretary --

Q: (laughs)

SIMONS: …and that I spoke fluent Urdu.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: Which was not true. My wife and I studied Urdu for fourteen weeks here at FSI in ’95, but then by the time we were ready to go, we were part of that tumbril of ambassadors that Jesse Helms held up for weeks and months trying to screw more favors out of the State Department. And so by the time we got over there, it had faded, and also we discovered that everybody with whom we were going to deal spoke English. So that was a lost opportunity, because it’s a wonderful poetic language.

So anyway, that was how I got to Pakistan. The problem once I got there, as I said the last time around, was convincing Washington or coming up with reasons for Washington as to why we should care about Pakistan really at all now that the Cold War was over. We had cared about them as an ally, we had been shoulder-to-shoulder in trying to get the Soviets out of Afghanistan. That’s the one time in the history of a very long relationship, which goes back officially to 1954, that we actually had an interest that overlapped pretty completely. But then the Soviets left Afghanistan in February of ’89, and in October of 1990 we no longer had a reason to wink at their nuclear program, because the Soviets were out of Afghanistan. And we cashiered our assistance program in retaliation for what we --

Q: Well, had we basically known this was going on, but we hadn’t done anything about it before?

SIMONS: We knew it was going on. We didn’t know exactly how far it had gone. And the Pressler Amendment from ’85 or ’86 said the President had to certify yearly that they did not possess a weapon. I think now we weren’t sure that we could make that certification with a clear conscience. After ’89, you had the Soviets leaving Afghanistan, and you had an insurgency breaking out next door in Indian-held Kashmir. The Pakistanis did not initiate that insurgency, but they certainly took heart from it. And they very quickly started to move resources in to support sort of sub-conventional war against India. So they felt things were going well for them, and we were starting to get evidence that they were tweaking up their nuclear program.

And we went to them. Bob Oakley was the Ambassador at the time and tells vivid stories of trying -- of going around town in Islamabad warning people that the Sword of Damocles was going to come down. But he did so in a situation where the three agencies of the Pakistan government were not talking to each other -- the President and the Chief of Army Staff and the Prime Minister had bad relations with each other -- and nobody wanted to listen. So in October 1990 we invoked sanctions, we cut off of what was then our third largest assistance program in the world after Israel and Egypt, and we kind of left Pakistan by itself. The civil war was going on in Afghanistan next door. The country had a lot of arms, I mean not like what it’s become since then, but certainly a lot of

weapons floating around. And it had a civilian government, which had returned after the death of the military dictator Zia ul-Haq in 1988, along with Arnie Raphel, a predecessor of mine. After that the Army decided to allow civilian government to return, but agreed with Benazir Bhutto, who was the new elected Prime Minister, to keep most of the national security decisions in their own hands, including the nuclear program, very heavily Afghanistan, and very heavily Kashmir.

So after October 1990, we had a much reduced relationship. My immediate predecessor, John Monjo, I don't know if you knew him, he was also in Indonesia, called himself the Ambassador of the Flat Wallet. Because we had really very little to offer the Pakistanis. So we had a relationship that was friendly, we had access, good access, but there was not much doing. That changed a little bit just before I came to Pakistan in January of 1996. First Benazir was expelled, then Nawaz Sharif had a first term, he was then expelled, and when I came Benazir was now in her second term as Prime Minister. And she had come to Washington in '95 and had a very successful official visit in which she not only charmed President Clinton, but she convinced him that it was unjust for us to be keeping all the equipment under sanctions that Pakistan had already paid for.

Q: Yeah. This always was -- we probably had that with Libya for years --

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: -- with C130's sitting --

SIMONS: Well, in Pakistan's case the most prominent item was the F16's. They had a bunch of F16's, which they had bought. I think probably with our money, but never mind. They were sitting out in the desert in Arizona trying to keep the sand out of their gears. And Clinton, after going through what we could do given the Congressional feeling about nuclear non-proliferation and our laws punishing proliferation, decided that we would give back all of it except for the F16's. They were too sensitive. So they stayed out there. And when I came in January of '96, we started to send the rest of the equipment -- and there were P-3 Orions, reconnaissance aircraft, there were spare parts – so that was coming back to Pakistan. And that was a positive. But the F-16, holding back on them, still stuck in Pakistani throats. You know, they're -- they paid for it fair and square or just about -- and we were not returning it. So that was kind of the situation in relations with Pakistan.

Then there was the larger situation, which was that the Cold War was over. Pakistan was no longer useful to us as an ally. India was becoming more attractive, and certainly Frank Wisner next door was making all the arguments that he could for India as a more attractive partner for the United States than it had ever been before. And at a certain point fairly early on in my tenure, he wrote a private letter to Sandy Berger, the Deputy National Security Advisor. Henry Kissinger had visited India, he's a strategic thinker, and his strategic thinking about India as a counterweight to China I think impressed Frank. So this is early on. And Frank wrote this letter to Sandy Berger arguing that we should be paying more attention to India on strategic grounds: you know, India as the

coming counterweight to China. And I wrote a sort of a rebuttal letter. Both of these letters ought to be in the -- at least in the NSC file – and mine pointed out that at that juncture it was uncertain that India that was going to be able to fulfil that role, and whether it would want to fulfil that role of counterweight to China. We couldn't know whether it would be capable of fulfilling that role. They were just starting their economic reform program, which led to the great boom of the Indian economy since then, but at that point, it was not so clear that the reform program was going to generate such a powerful effect as the seven, eight, nine percent annual growth rates we later saw. And so, I asked, is India going to be able to fulfil the role that Frank envisages for them?

Finally, I said, you know, switching to India in the meantime is going to drive the Pakistanis crazy, as it always does. And while the Pakistanis may not be as valuable a partner as they have been in the past, especially during the Afghanistan War, there are lots of global issues that pass through Pakistan, where the Pakistanis can be either helpful or troublesome. And I pointed out the possibility of drugs and terrorism coming out of Afghanistan, which remained in a civil war situation. I pointed out the possibility of a radicalization in Pakistani society, although that was not a main argument. I pointed out that Pakistan was an attractive investment target, a target for trade and investment for the United States. We had American firms in Pakistan under very favorable conditions in a program of the Benazir government for building power plants, because they had a tremendous power shortage. And so you had AEG, I think, building two power plants of 700 megawatts apiece, and other American companies were also engaged. At that point, American foreign direct private investment in Pakistan was in fact two and three times per capita what it was in India, because India still had these state-run economies. That was when Enron got in trouble in Maharashtra and finally withdrew from cooperation in Maharashtra State. So Pakistan was an attractive trade and investment partner. And finally, I noted, in a world where the Islamic world was facing radicalism, Islamist radicalism, if Pakistan could have success as a democratic, constitutional, political system it would be of some importance to us. I never heard back from Sandy; I don't know whether Frank did or not.

So anyway, I mean there were all those reasons, and I would send out these strategy checklists. And also, I pointed out, it wouldn't cost us very much. We weren't putting anything into it then, so doing a little more would not be very costly, recognizing the budgetary stringency of the post-World War world. And everybody checked the boxes. I mean everybody kind of agreed that this was a solid approach, a sound approach, that there were these reasons to care about Pakistan. But the truth was that there was no energy.

Q: Did you find in place the Bureau of Central Asian Affairs, or not?

SIMONS: No, it was a new bureau of South Asian Affairs.

Q: South Asian Affairs.

SIMONS: It was a new small bureau, and I had a sense it was sort of foisted on the Department by the Congress. The Assistant Secretary was Robin Raphel, a very capable, experienced officer who was coming from being Political Counselor in Delhi.

Q: Yes, I've interviewed Robin.

SIMONS: Yeah. She was also the widow of Arnie Raphel who'd been killed, the first wife; there had been a second wife subsequent to that. So she was very experienced, very, very active and energetic. But it was a small bureau headed by a person who had not been an ambassador. The Indians were unhappy with that.

Q: Well, the Indians always seemed to -- from interviews I've had over the years, it seems that the Indians get caught up sort of with the ranks within the State Department: not so interested in where power is or how you manipulate it, but they want to see the top person, which is not necessarily the way to get things done.

SIMONS: Yeah, and it's not necessarily in their best interest, but they do attach a lot of importance to status. We also didn't have much of a relationship with India, and that's what happens when you have a thin relationship: status issues become more important. I think both India and Pakistan were pleased that they had this separate bureau. But it was not a very muscular bureau and so --

Q: Well, did you find as you were there that within the Bureau or within the State Department that there was an Indian club and a Pakistani club, or how did things get back here?

SIMONS: There were, there were: there were people who specialized in India and people who specialized in Pakistan. Just as in the Eastern Mediterranean there were people who specialized in Turkey and people who specialized in Greece.

Q: Mm-hmm.

SIMONS: And they tended to argue with each other. But since we didn't have very vibrant relationships with either, it was not terribly important. I mean the Indians were becoming more active. The Indian-American community is larger than the Pakistani-American community. But they were both educated when they came. A lot of them were doctors. They were fairly wealthy for their size. And the Indian community was getting more active in American politics. At a certain point I think a Second Secretary of the Indian Embassy was caught carrying a bag of cash that he was going to distribute to Indian-Americans, and that was kind of an embarrassment. But neither (of the two communities) was extremely powerful.

Where things tended to crystallize in terms of the clout of this new little bureau was over the question of sanctioning Pakistan. First came the question of lifting some of the sanctions from October of '90. That whole question was called "the Brown Amendment,"

because the legislation for it was sponsored by a Republican Senator from Colorado named Hank Brown. And the Indians were, you know, very lukewarm about seeing that happen. But it was mainly not a question of our India specialists versus our Pakistan specialists. It was really our South Asia people versus our non-proliferation people. Because non-proliferation was a U.S. interest of its own, which was global. It was attractive to the Clinton administration. And it had a constituency on the Hill, which -- well, let me explain how it works.

The problem would be lifting sanctions on Pakistan or increasing the sanctions on Pakistan when you had new information coming in about what they were doing in their nuclear program. This would come from CIA. In terms of intelligence, almost all of our efforts in Pakistan were focused on the nuclear target. And you would come up with new information about what the Pakistanis were doing. You had the analysts in CIA who would send this information forward. At a certain point, the point would come where you were going to have to apply new sanctions under our law. If you were going to fulfil our law. And consistently, after battles within the Administration, we would consistently refuse to do that. That was partly because the evidence was never definitive. But it was also partly because we valued our relationship with Pakistan. And this would make the CIA people dealing with non-proliferation with Pakistan angry. And at that point you would start to get leaks. You would start to get leaks on the Hill, to The Washington Times --

Q: I'm going to have to point out to somebody reading this, the leak is -- this is one of the weapons in the Washington circle. If you're pushing -- if you feel you're losing bureaucratically – you leak to the papers and all, I mean it's a --

SIMONS: Yeah. And then you do it to increase the pressure, or just to make trouble, because these people were honestly angry that their good information was not being acted on. So that is kind of the mechanism for the struggles within Government.

I think my letter to Sandy Berger in response to Frank Wisner's letter put that argument to rest at that level. I mean we didn't hear really until the Bush-the-son Administration about India as a counterweight to a rising China. China at that point did not look particularly rising, just as India did not look like a certain or a secure candidate to be a counterweight to China. I think all of that crystallized in the U.S. Government in the -- what do you call the zero-zero's? I mean the --

Q: The zero sum?

SIMONS: No, the first decade of the 21st millennium. The people coming of age are called millennials, is it --

Q Millennials.

SIMONS: Yeah, the millennial decade. It didn't crystallize really until after 2001, so the situation was different then. I mean those were the issues in dealing with Pakistan then.

Afghanistan continued to be in the grips of a civil war. We knew that drugs were becoming more important because it was a ruined economy. In 1994, finally, the Taliban arose in Afghanistan. These were Islamists, but sort of provincial Islamists, at that point animated not so much by Middle Eastern radical Islamism, of the kind that later became famous under the label of al-Qaeda, but really very much a Subcontinental version of Islamic reformism, which went back to the great Deoband madrasa in the United Provinces of India, which had been there since 1864, promoting purification and simplification of Islam there. And a lot of the Taliban leadership were trained in Deoband madrasas, some in India, but especially in Pakistan. There was a big one in Attock on the road between Islamabad and Peshawar where they were trained. So it was sort of a homegrown Islamist reformism, which came up in Afghanistan basically as a law-and-order movement, really to clean up the mess of the civil war. The capital of Kabul was destroyed not by the Communists or the Russians, but by these Afghan Mujahideen factions fighting each other and bombarding each other, depending on who was in charge in the capital.

Taliban was a new movement supported by the Pakistanis. But it was on that basis (as a law-and-order movement) that it had kind of swept to power beginning in 1994, first Herat in the west, then in September of 1996, Kabul. At that point we had no representation in Afghanistan; all of the intelligence assets had been withdrawn, so we didn't even have networks there. We did have people in the Agency watching for Mir Aimal Kansi, who had gunned down CIA employees arriving at work out at Langley and then fled back to his native Baluchistan. And so we had a certain number of people in CIA tracking him, trying to find him, but they didn't have people on the ground in Afghanistan doing that.

So the Taliban came to power in Kabul in September of 1996. At that point, the Pakistanis tried a mediation effort. The Taliban I think were stunned by their victory in Kabul. It was still the Benazir Bhutto government in Pakistan. The Interior Minister was himself a Pashtun. Babar. I forget his first name (Naseerullah Khan Babar). But anyway, Babar attempted to do a shuttle effort between Taliban and the resistance in what became the Northern Alliance, trying to get a ceasefire and the beginnings perhaps of a political process. I thought that was hopeful because the Taliban did not know what to expect. And I encouraged it. I remember that he gave a briefing at the Foreign Ministry and I went up afterwards and shook his hand. That proceeded over the course of the fall. And I think that there was some hope to it.

Our part in this was a mini-impulse from Washington to go in and make contact with the newly victorious Taliban. This was not because we liked them, but because they were winning and our policy was to be in touch with all the Afghan factions. I was in Chitral, on a visit to the northern province of the former princely state of Chitral, when the news came of the Taliban victory in Kabul. My DCM, John Holzman, calls from Islamabad to say, "Robin (Robin Raphel, the Assistant Secretary) wants me to go to Kabul." And I said, "Well, what will you say? What will your message be?"
He said, "Well, we haven't talked about that yet. But she just thinks it's -- we should go."
And I said, "Well, you know, I'm not going to object to that. I just think until you have

something to say it's probably not wise to go in there. Because the expectations will be high." Well, I think the Taliban saved us from ourselves by saying it was too soon for them to receive an American official visitor. So he didn't go. And we were spared what I think would have probably been the embarrassment of an unproductive visit.

Q: Well, during this initial time with the Taliban coming up, were we aware or was there action on the part of the Pakistan military intelligence service pointing to connections to the extremists in the Islamic movement?

SIMONS: Well, they were certainly in touch with Taliban, and they were certainly in touch with the freedom fighters in Kashmir. And the freedom fighters in Kashmir were getting more and more extremist and more and more dependent on Pakistan. Because that was what happened in the course of that insurgency. At the beginning in 1989, the original insurgents were basically Kashmiri separatists. They didn't want to be with India, but they also did not want to be with Pakistan. And Pakistan, in shifting assets from Afghanistan and then beefing up its contribution to the freedom struggle in Kashmir, did not favor these separatists. And so you got the awful situation -- I mean I've never seen a study that confirmed it, but it was widely believed, and I believed and believe it now -- that the Pakistanis also engaged in shenanigans like fingering separatists for the Indians then to go after and get. So as a result of this de facto connivance of the Indians and the Pakistanis against Kashmiri separatists, the freedom fight in Kashmir became more and more Islamist. It became more and more based on religion and jihad, and also more and more under the thumb of the Pakistani intelligence service. The Indians gradually cracked down on it; the Indians were savage in Kashmir. I mean the Pakistani figure was 50,000 killed, you know, which is what we lost in Vietnam and what we lost in Korea. I see it on the monument; so a lot of people were killed.

Q: These are the troops?

SIMONS: No, these are civilians killed by troops. Civilians and freedom fighters.

Q: Oh.

SIMONS: I mean you had insurgents there. But anyway, it was a bloody repression. So no, no excuses for the Indians. But the Indians were getting hold of it, and the Pakistanis continued to support it, and their support became more and more critical to the insurgency, and the insurgency became more and more Islamist. Now, that meant Islamist in a jihadi sense, which was a little different from Taliban; I mean it was more related to what later became al-Qaeda. It was more of a Middle Eastern takeover of the state in order to humiliate our enemies -- or, you know, get rid of our enemies -- and then everything will be wonderful because God will provide. I mean there was that kind of a mentality.

And the Pakistani intelligence services certainly supported that. In Afghanistan they supported the Taliban, who were Afghans, and freedom fighters in Kashmir, where they are now generally Pakistanis. You had a sprinkling of people from the Middle East who'd

fought in Afghanistan. But in Afghanistan, they were mainly Afghan former fighters in the struggle against the Soviets who'd been trained in these madrasas, and who were going to clean up the mess on a religious basis. The Pakistanis supported that. The main Pakistani intelligent service is recruited from the Army. The military intelligence service, the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate), is recruited from the Army; it depends for its promotions on the Army. So the Army has a certain control over it, although in those days it had separate budgets and not much accountability. But support for Taliban, from within the ISI, could come either because you had elements in the ISI who were Islamist, possibly -- because Zia had opened up the Army to people who were from madrasas rather than from English-medium, Western education, so that you had more and more people in the Pakistani military services who were from that kind of a madrasa background -- but a lot of them were also Pashtuns.

Q: Mm-hmm.

SIMONS: And they also would support Taliban just on the basis of the generally accepted Pakistani view that Pakistan can never afford to be on the wrong side of a Pashtun government in Kabul. That if the Taliban were going to win, Pakistan had to be there with them, because it just couldn't afford hostility with the Pashtun government in Kabul because of its own Pashtun population. Because the Pashtun population is split across the border. So those are the reasons why ISI would support the Taliban. They also tried to make an argument early on that this was going to be favorable to Pakistani commercial relations with newly liberated Central Asia. In other words, there was going to be a new kind of Silk Road that was going to go around through Herat and up into Central Asia, and this was going to be a source of some prosperity and a strategic anchor to prevent Pakistan's nightmare that the Indians are going to do an end-run or a pincer movement and be extraordinarily influential in Afghanistan.

Q: Well, the Turks also kind of felt --

SIMONS: -- that they were going to move into Central Asia.

Q: That too.

SIMONS: Yeah, and they overplayed their hand too. But the Pakistanis were particularly bad. The first delegation to Central Asia had a bunch of mullahs in it. You know, they were going to teach Islam to the Central Asians, who were Soviet-trained secularists. So that did not make a good impression there. But anyway, the concrete thing affecting the U.S. was that Naseerullah Khan Babar, the Interior Minister and a Pashtun, who had a big influence on what was going on out there, ran a convoy across the southern part of Afghanistan to Herat to demonstrate the opening of this new prospect of a trade route to Central Asia. And he took the British High Commissioner and the American ambassador with him. John Monjo agreed to go on that convoy. This was in 1994 to '95. I would not have done it, because it really did give the impression that we were, you know, that we were strapped to Babar's chariot wheel and to the Taliban chariot wheel. But the combination of that trip and Robin's desire to get in and have contact with the Taliban

(and she later went in herself to do that) created a widespread impression that we were really behind them, that we really favored their takeover whatever we said. Which was never true. I mean we just didn't want to be on the wrong side of a winner in a country where we had very, very modest interests. Let me stop there for a second and go get myself another cup of coffee.

Q: Please do.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: While you're doing this, can you talk a bit about your connections? I mean was the American Ambassador much of a player? I mean, first place, about you and your evaluation of Benazir Bhutto, and then relations with the Pakistani military and all that?

SIMONS: OK. Yeah, I think it's pertinent. I think this is also the time in the interview to talk about it, because we're in 1996. The Taliban have taken Kabul. Naseerullah Khan Babar's mediation effort is underway. But meanwhile, the Benazir Bhutto government is dying. She is fighting everyone. I had pretty good relations around town. I had a decent relationship with the President, Farooq Leghari, who was from a great Baluchistan family and who'd been a party supporter of hers in the Pakistan People's Party, and whom she had put in as a puppet. I mean she had put him in as her person in the Presidency, because her bad relationship with Ghulam Ishaq Khan had been one of the things that led to her ouster earlier in the decade when he was President. Ishaq was a civil servant. And Leghari was a civil servant, had also been a civil servant. Anyway, I had decent relations, but not close. I mean I wasn't at his doorstep. In fact I had good relations really with everyone around town.

I suppose the best relations were with the Chief of Army Staff. Oh gosh. Jehangir Karamat was a cavalry officer who'd come up through the ranks. He had been the Director General for Military Operations; I mean he'd gone step-by-step through the ranks to become army chief shortly before I got there. And he was one of the first people I saw, because one of the first things that happened when I came was that Sandy Berger came rushing over in January of 1996, the month I presented my credentials, in order to rap knuckles over the nuclear program. So we saw Karamat in action, as we also saw Benazir; I'm not sure he saw the President. But that was the troika -- it was the President, the Prime Minister, and the Chief of Army Staff – that was broadly recognized as the troika of Pakistani politics. They also recognized that the situation Oakley had described in October of '90, when these three instances in the Pakistani power structure weren't talking to each other, had been damaging to Pakistan. It was one of the things that got us into applying sanctions. So this time they were going to stay together. I mean they very carefully coordinated their talking points; they all spoke from the same sheet of music during that Sandy Berger visit. I think Sandy felt for the rest of his career that he had kind of been lied to. But it was never possible to prove it, because they sort of claimed that they were doing nothing different from what they'd done before, so, so it turned out to be a warning, and they kept up their program nonetheless.

So anyway, my best relations were with the Chief of Army Staff on the one hand and on the other with a grand figure in Pakistani politics, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Y-A-Q-U-B, who had been eight times Foreign Minister. He had been Ambassador to Washington in the '80s and Foreign Minister before and after; he was immensely experienced, immensely civilized, cultivated, a polyglot. He had learned both German and Russian as a prisoner of the Germans captured after the Siege of Tobruk with the Fourth Indian Division during World War II; he had spent the war in an Oflag in Germany where he learned both German and fluent Russian. But he had been the commanding officer in East Pakistan while the Pakistanis were trying to repress it in '69 and '70, and he had resigned.

Q: Well, that was a very bloody and divisive time.

SIMONS: Terrible. And he resigned because he didn't want to be part of it. And he had survived; he had managed to keep his political credibility because he was such an immense figure, and he went on to be one of the architects of the Afghan war and the Afghan peace too, such as it was, in '89. So he was a good friend, and I could talk to him. Another was Zia's former chief of staff, Syed Refaqat Kahn, R-E-F-A-Q-A-T, who had been involved in the decision in 1988 after Zia's assassination to return to civilian government. So these were people I could talk to, and of course the Chief of Army Staff is in a position of authority, but both Yaqub and Refaqat had influence, and then there were others, there were other ex-generals like Talat Masood (or Nishat Ahmed) who were able to give me the feel for what was going on in the military, and were able to carry messages if I had a message to deliver.

I think I probably affected Pakistani politics as ambassador twice. One of them has been published in a footnote to I think Strobe Talbott's book on Engaging India. But the first one was when Leghari got tired of Benazir picking fights with everyone including him -- and this is in the fall of 1996 -- and with the corruption in her Administration. All Pakistani administrations are corrupt; it's part of the political way of doing things there, because corruption serves to keep the patronage networks going. But Leghari was getting tired of her and was starting to feel that she was bad for the country. And suddenly in November of 1996, he expelled her, kicked her out. And I went to him the next day and had a one-on-one with him as American Ambassador. And he explained what had led him to this decision. I listened and recorded it. But I also made the point that Americans simply would not understand if he chose not to follow the prescription of the constitution, which was an interim government of three months and then a new election for a new Parliament that would pick a new Prime Minister. Because I knew from talking around town that he was going to be under a lot of pressure to appoint a government of technocrats for an extended period. That was partly because in one of the last previous crises, the political changes in 1993, they brought back a wonderful man from the World Bank in Washington, Moeen Qureshi, as interim prime minister. And really, Qureshi had gotten a lot of reform done that could not be done by ordinary elected governments because of the complications of the politics. So for that, and also because people were fed up with the corruption and self-serving character of the parties, there was -- you knew it was out in society because you talked to people -- there was going to be pressure for a caretaker technocrat government. And I wanted to make a point to Leghari that

Americans would not understand that. And I think he took that on board. In other words, he stayed with the constitution. Najam Sethi, who's the editor of Pakistan's most wonderful political journal weekly, The Friday Times in Lahore, came on board that caretaker government to fight corruption. And I remember his being angry – and I think he's still angry -- with me for having supported going by the book of the constitution. So that was one instance in which maybe we had some influence.

A second one was after Benazir was succeeded by, when the election brought to power Nawaz Sharif from the Pakistan Muslim League. It was the alternative mainstream party, center-right as Benazir and the People's Party is center-left. The election brought him to power with a tremendous majority, because a quarter of Benazir's vote bank just stayed home. She believed the election was rigged, and it probably was not. And so Nawaz came to power with this very large majority. He had a large enough majority to pass constitutional amendments, and the one that he immediately passed was the elimination of the previous amendment providing that the President could dissolve the assembly by himself. So at that point it became a fully parliamentary government in a way it had not been for decades. But then Nawaz, like Benazir, started picking fights.

Q: I was --

SIMONS: Started picking fights with the Court.

Q: Is this a personality thing, you think, or --

SIMONS: No, I think it is the insecurity of power in a country like that, and they feel that if they aren't in total control, they're not in control at all. I mean they're afraid: they're simply afraid of losing power. So Benazir had started a fight with the Supreme Court in order to get her own Supreme Court, and that was one of the things that made people so angry with her. This was in 1996, my first year. Nawaz no sooner got in in 1997 that he started doing the same thing, fighting with the Supreme Court, to the point where the Chief Justice appealed to the Army Chief to protect him because Nawaz had goons attack the Supreme Court building, led by politicians who were out there in the crowd egging people on. I mean Pakistan politics is really a nasty business. But at any rate, I sat next to a retired general who I knew was close to the Army Chief while this was going on. And I said to him, you know, Americans feel that if democracy's in trouble the answer is not less democracy, it's more democracy, and that's the way to do that. This has gone into the record as something that the American ambassador said; and Jehangir did refrain from entering the fray. In other words, he did not use the Army to resolve the fight between the Supreme Court and the Prime Minister. And the Prime Minister won.

Now, what happened after that -- and this was after my time, a couple months after my time -- was that Nawaz then went after him, after the Army Chief. I left in August of 1998, and in October of 1998, he was out. He had been promoting the setting up of a National Security Council system, of which the Army would be a part. I thought it was a good idea because it would give an institutional form to the de facto role of the Army in Pakistani politics. Well, Nawaz was afraid of it. He didn't want the Army's role

institutionalized. And he wanted a successor to Jehangir Karamat. He thought Jehangir had a candidate, which was true: Ali Kuli Khan, from the next generation of generals. But Pervez Musharraf was promoting himself at that point to be Chief of Army Staff, Nawaz wanted him, and Karamat resigned. And he told Nawaz, "You know, all you have to do if you want somebody in place of me is to tell me, and I'll make it happen." But it didn't work out that way, and he resigned, and Musharraf then became Chief of Army Staff.

So those were the kinds of connections that I had. The mysterious part for me still is that during that autumn of 1996 when Benazir was sinking deeper and deeper into the mess of her own making, first Yaqub Khan, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, came for tea, and then Syed Refaqat came for tea. And after a demonstration of his Baroque forensic skills, talking around the subject, and around and around the subject, Yaqub asked in the most elliptical possible way what I thought of Benazir as a Prime Minister. And I remember my answer. My answer was that, you know, if you put pressure on her she'll just become nastier. But I think what Yaqub heard -- And then Refaqat came, and his question was a little different. He said, "Have you heard that at our last military maneuvers out in Baluchistan, the scenario that they were using for the maneuver was the use of a nuclear weapon?" And I said well, you know, I'll look into it. So the point of his meeting with me was not clear.

But as I look back on them I think that the reason they were having tea with me was to figure out how strongly we were attached to Benazir. And what they heard from me was that we're not very attached to Benazir. And Benazir always felt that I kicked her out because we had an inflammatory meeting in the spring of that year over the gas pipeline from project, from Turkmenistan to Pakistan, that was being promoted by Unocal, the American oil company. And we were supporting that. They had a memorandum of understanding from the Turkmen and the Afghans supporting this project. And I went to her office on a very bad day for her. She was doing Punjabi politics, than which there's almost nothing worse in the world, so she was tired and red-eyed when I saw her. But among the business things I was supporting was the Unocal project. I urged her to authorize Pakistani signature of this memorandum of understanding, which would give the seal of approval of the three governments for this pipeline. And she said, "Well, I couldn't possibly do that because that would be a breach of contract." Well, the only contract that she could possibly have been talking about was a contract between her husband and the Argentine competitor for this pipeline project, Carlos Bulgheroni. And I said, "Well, what you just said sounds like extortion." I used the word. This is after 30 years of a diplomat. I should have known better than to use a word like that with a tired chief of government.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: And she just blew up on me. She said, "Your President could not *possibly* have authorized you to say that."

And I said, "There's still a problem."

And she, she almost threw me out of the room. The Foreign Secretary (Najmuddin Sheikh) who's sitting next to her was petrified over what had happened. (I was later told her foreign affairs advisor Zafar Hilaly, who was also there, urged her to PNG me.) And that night I got a call from Washington. Najm had called Washington to say that you have to get Simons to apologize. And so overnight I drafted a letter saying I regret the language that I used, so not quite an apology. "But I hope our relations will continue, you know, because it's such an important relationship." And she wrote an equally gracious thing back the next day.

But after Leghari fired her in November of 1996 and she started her election campaign, I sent our Consul General in Karachi, Doug Archard, in to see her. And he sat there and listened to her tirade about how unjustly she'd been treated and how it was all a conspiracy. He took notes, and then walked out without saying anything on behalf of the U.S. Government. And as he walked out, you could hear the coffee table with everything on it being kicked over and the glass shattering, she was so angry, I think, at not having -- not being supported. But she then started putting out that I was the one who was responsible for her expulsion, because, as she put it, she would not do a business favor for a friend of mine.

This got out into public, and other people rebutted it. But really, as I look back, the only substance to the charge that I was responsible for her expulsion was my tepid reaction to the calls of Yaqub Khan and Refaqat Khan earlier when they were really probing me on how attached we were to her.

Anyway, that was -- those -- that was the range of contacts that I had. I had good relations with Nawaz Sharif, and even better relations with his Chief of Staff who was a senior civil servant, a former Secretary of Punjab government. And it was to him that I would take most of the issues, and would also get action. I was careful about, you know, pressing things. We did not have a rich relationship. We still had the F-16's. But for instance, at a certain point I think I was able to head off the kind of incident that had burned down our Embassy chancery in 1979.

Q: Oh, that was terrible, yes.

SIMONS: Yeah. We had people killed, Pakistani employees and U.S. employees killed, while Zia-ul-Haq -- the military dictator -- was riding his bicycle around Rawalpindi demonstrating the joys of a healthy life. And so Pakistani police did not show up to drive the students away before they torched the Embassy and trapped most of our personnel under the roof. My Station Chief in Islamabad, Gary Schroen, had been in the station at that time, and he was the first one out on the roof before they fried or suffocated, because the rest of the chancery was on fire. And he had no idea whether he would have his head shot off or not when he went out there. But they had gone, they had evacuated by that time. Anyway, that attack was provoked by Iranian radio reporting that the U.S. was behind an attack on the holy places in Mecca. That was what enraged the students and provoked the attack on our compound and on the Chancery. And I saw the same thing starting to build.

The ISI was very angry with the way we ran around the country. I mean, for instance, they kept saying, "You have to get rid of tinted windshields in your cars, because we don't know who you are." And I said, "Do you ask the North Koreans to get rid of their tinted windshields?" And they said no, so I said OK, I'll wait. But anyway, we started getting newspaper reports about hordes of U.S. spies, you know, coming into Peshawar and staying in the Pearl Hotel. And then we started to get from Tehran the same kinds of reports about U.S. fiddling around (in Pakistan) with religion.

So I could see the same thing building. And I don't know where it was coming from, I had no idea, but I suspected it was ISI. You know, just trying to back us off and keep us from running around the way we did. And so I went to the Prime Minister and I said, "I don't know where it's coming from, but please stop it, because we lost one embassy and we don't want to lose another one; it's my people who can be killed." And sure enough the stuff all stopped. I mean that's the kind of stuff -- I have to say on behalf of the Foreign Service -- I think that's the kind of stuff that only experienced Foreign Service people can pick up and put together and do things about.

Q: The Prime Minister, when you went and they called it off, that was?

SIMONS: Nawaz Sharif.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: That was Nawaz Sharif, who was the next one. And I remember the first time I saw him -- I mean he's a very decent guy -- and he said, "Give me advice." You know, "I need your advice." I said, "Well, it's not my job to give you advice. You're the elected Prime Minister of the country. There's no more room for a viceroy." (Bob Oakley had been kind of a viceroy for Benazir her first time round.)

Q: Well, did you find, in looking at Pakistan, this corruption that seemed to permeate almost everything? I don't know if it's at the military or not, but was this a tremendous inhibitor for development?

SIMONS: Well, I think yes and no. I don't think it was at the point where it determined the country's poor economic performance. I think it affected it. For instance on these power plants: our companies, the companies that were building these power plants, were of course inhibited by U.S. legislation from engaging in corruption. But they all had Pakistani partners; they were all kind of dual-button things. And it's a part of doing business, but it didn't prevent business from being done. You know, that's like a tax on business. And Lee Kuan Yew the Singapore leader came to Pakistan at one point, before I got there, but his reply was famous. Some Pakistani was getting up and sucking up to him by inveighing against corruption, and he said, "Wait a minute, corruption in my part of the world is part of doing business." So there's that kind of element. As long as it doesn't get so bad that it prevents things from happening.

Q: Often it's basically paying for services.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: Rather than just automatically getting them as we do, you know, if you want the government to do something for you, you pay for it.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: I mean it --

SIMONS: It's bad, but there are lots of things that go into that. I mean the fact that the Pakistani military takes so much of the budget has to do with Kashmir and the dispute with India. The military itself is less corrupt, except that they own a lot -- big chunks of the economy. And those are used as patronage for military and ex-military personnel. So you know, it works both ways. I didn't find that the country was dysfunctional.

Q: Did we as a nation, or whatever you want to say, get involved in trying to settle the Kashmir dispute? I mean did we see that it was settle-able, for one thing?

SIMONS: I don't think we thought it was settle-able. We'd weigh in to encourage Indo-Pakistani dialogue. We had an issue in Kashmir that kept us engaged for a part of my tenure, because in 1995 you had American tourists who were taken hostage and then disappeared. And one of them had a spouse or a partner, a wonderful woman from Spokane, Washington, named Jane Shelly, who kept the drums beating in Congress, and who would come out to talk to the Pakistanis. She wanted simply to find closure, to find what had happened to her husband. And the Pakistanis were sympathetic, because they said it was a rogue freedom fighter outfit. I mean it was not even a breakaway branch of the main freedom fighter outfit, the Harakat ul-Ansar, who'd done it. We kept probing and probing, working with the Indians, sending people from the Embassy in New Delhi up into Kashmir to probe on it. And finally I think the best information we had was that already in December of '95, in other words even before I'd arrived, that the Indians had gotten so close (to the kidnappers) that they'd killed the hostages and buried them somewhere and then been killed themselves by Indian counterterrorism forces. So that kept us engaged in Kashmir.

But as far as the Kashmir dispute itself was concerned, our position was that it has to be worked out between India and Pakistan. In other words, that was a continual disappointment to the Pakistanis, because years before we had supported the implementation of the UN resolution of 1949, which called for a plebiscite. We had backed away from that by the time I got there, and we now said, you know, you need to work it out with --

Q: Why did we back away from that?

SIMONS: Well, because it wasn't getting anywhere. The Indians were never going to accept that. The Indian position was that once Pakistan invited us into the Subcontinent and refused to withdraw its troops from Azad Kashmir, from the Pakistani-held portion of Kashmir, and then once India had held various votes there (on their side), that Kashmir was a fully legitimate part of the Indian Union. I mean supporting the resolution wasn't going to get you anywhere. And so we supported dialogue. And also Pakistan had agreed to it in the Simla Agreement after the 1971 war. The Indian Army had intervened in East Pakistan and freed East Pakistan as Bangladesh, and Mr. Bhutto as Pakistani Prime Minister had negotiated with Mrs. Gandhi in Simla, and the agreement there was that Kashmir was something for India and Pakistan to settle by negotiation.

Q: Mm-hmm.

SIMONS: And so we supported that, which the Pakistanis had also. So that was the attitude on Kashmir. At one point Benazir asked us to send a message to the Indians on Kashmir. We did. I got in touch with Frank and he took it in to South Block, which is the Indian foreign office, or maybe to the Presidency, the Raj Bhavan. But we did very little of that because we also didn't want the Pakistanis to wrap us into a mediating role, which the Indians would then reject. So the Indians accepted that message, but we weren't going to be able to keep carrying messages for Pakistan.

Q: Well, was there any reflection of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the change in the Soviet leadership, with Gorbachev and all that, in the India-Pakistan relationship?

SIMONS: Well, yeah. The collapse of the Soviet Union in December of 1991 deprived India of its main foreign partner. And that included a big military supply relationship; it included an economic assistance relationship; it included a trade relationship: all that kind of just shriveled away. So just as Pakistan was kind of left alone, at home alone, when we applied sanctions in October of 1990, and a year later India in the midst of a full-fledged economic crisis was left at home alone by the disappearance of the Soviet Union. And I think that that eventually led to the nuclear explosions of 1998. Because neither country was looking outside: more and more they were taking national security decisions based on domestic, political compulsions, as they put it in South Asia. And I think that's what led to the explosions. India exploded its nuclear weapon in May of '98 because it was in the political platform of the newly elected government led by the BJP (the Bharatiya Janata Party), a Hindu nationalist government. Nawaz Sharif responded after 17 days of strenuous U.S. efforts to back him off, and he responded because he was convinced -- and probably correctly -- that if he did not explode the Pakistani weapons in response he'd be kicked out. I mean his own elites would kick him out of office. The pressure was building that high.

So I don't think the Gorbachev period, the liberalization, and then the disappearance of the Soviet Union had much effect on the India-Pakistan situation. Indian-held Kashmir was terribly mismanaged, it was sort of a corrupt colonial government, and that's what led to the insurgency in the summer of 1989. But it wasn't Pakistan that did that. Pakistan

took advantage of it, or tried to. So it was really being left at home alone, the Indians with an insurgency on their hands, and the Pakistanis trying to stoke that insurgency. But the Indians kind of got hold of it. And meanwhile, Pakistan was supporting these freedom fighters who became more and more jihadi, became more and more Islamist in terms of ideology. The Kashmiri separatists, the original Kashmir insurgents, were like Fatah rather than like Hamas, but they were being wiped out with Pakistani connivance by the Indians. And it was getting to be more and more of a religious crusade. But this was starting to create rot inside Pakistan itself. You know, these people were recruiting and being kept alive by the ISI. And a decade later -- not in my time -- they started to turn against the Pakistani state that had nurtured them. And that's the situation now. Lashkar-e-Taiba, the organization that conducted the attack on Mumbai in November 2008, is the one major Pakistani insurgent or Islamist organization that is not against the Pakistani state. All the rest are. And now they sort of blow up ISI offices and the Army headquarters involved. The Pakistanis have a real problem now, but that was not true in my day. I mean that's something that developed afterward.

Q: What about China?

SIMONS: China at this point had kind of gotten to the same place that we were in on Kashmir. They were not yet afraid of Pakistani nurturing of Islamist insurgents from Xinjiang as they have been since 9/11. But they didn't find the Islamist trend in Pakistan government very attractive even then. The Soviets were out of Afghanistan. They had put their own relationship with India kind of on ice; in other words, the two kind of -- India and Pakistan had agreed to set aside the territorial dispute and work on other issues.

Q: India and China.

SIMONS: Yes, excuse me, India and China. They had agreed to set aside their territorial dispute, which had led them to war in 1962, and to work on other issues: trade, people-to-people, that sort of thing. And the Pakistanis continued to see China as their most reliable foreign partner. But when Jiang Zemin came to Pakistan on an official visit, I was in the National Assembly when he commended the Chinese approach to the Pakistanis, which is to set border disputes and thus Kashmir aside. And you could hear a pin drop. You could hear a pin drop: total silence after he said that. After it was translated. And then beginning the next day you had a tidal wave of op-ed pieces and editorials in Pakistani newspapers, obviously inspired by intelligence, about how China's our true and best friend, our most allied ally, how they support us 100%, how they're our anchor in any storm. You know, that kind of thing. So the Pakistanis got the message and the Chinese message was very much like ours: you're going to have to do it with India.

Q: Now, does Pakistan have anything that anybody wants? I'm thinking of economic things. I mean is it --

SIMONS: I think they're the world's largest emerald producer. They have cotton; they export some, but mainly they have a boisterous cotton industry, which exports to us as well and which could use a little boost by cutting some of our quotas or loosening up. We

have some kind of a quota relationship which inhibits them in some way because we, you know, we protect our textile industry too. Otherwise not. They buy wheat from us because they're almost self-sufficient in foodstuffs, but not quite. So we have market of a couple of million dollars for wheat there. They don't have a whole lot that people want. They have a location between India and China and Iran and Afghanistan, which is important. And they trade on that. I mean they would like the world to love them because of their location, rather than their *vocation*. In other words, it shouldn't matter how corrupt and awful they are because of where they are. And you know, the U.S. accepts that kind of thing in a globalizing world less and less. That was one of the problems I had. Because the reasons that we cared about Pakistan now that the Cold War was over, the geographic reasons, because it was south of the Soviet Union, now had to do with drugs, with nuclear non-proliferation, with terrorism, and you know, these are global issues.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: These are issues in which Pakistan plays, but they're not critical for any single one of them. And so it's hard to mobilize interest in Pakistan.

Q: And also, well I suppose too, when you talk about Pakistan, you have to talk about India.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: India is more attractive tourist-wise, and history-wise.

SIMONS: And economy-wise; it's a bigger economy.

Q: Yeah. And it has a real democracy.

SIMONS: Yeah, that's right. That's right. And the father of the Indian bomb does not go around the world selling nuclear weapons technology.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: Which is what the Pakistanis did. Because they're so loose. A.Q. Khan, the father of their bomb, was getting what they wanted. I mean he was buying and stealing technology from others, and using it to produce this program, which all Pakistanis supported: I mean it's not controversial that they should have a weapons program. Was not, will not be. But the government was such that you kind of had an enclave operation there within the government. And no one was asking what he was paying for what he was getting. I think that was generally true. I mean I've talked to the generals in the Strategic Planning Office of the Army there, which runs their nuclear program, and they claim they were totally surprised, and I think that is probably true. I know that when we watched the Pakistani program, we had a pretty good idea of what they were getting from North Korea, because we could see the planes take off from North Korea and land in Pakistan

carrying missile equipment and stuff like that, centrifuges, I guess they get them there. No, sorry, centrifuges they got from elsewhere. But anyway, we knew pretty much what was coming in, but we had no idea what was going out. So we were surprised too. We heard from the Libyans. It was all after my time, but it was when Qaddafi agreed to shut down his nuclear program that he revealed to us that he'd been getting technology from the Pakistanis. And I think that was true within the Pakistani government too. Now, of course, that doesn't build confidence. And now, years later, the Pakistanis, one of their talking points is that we should give them the same civil nuclear deal that we gave the Indians. And the answer is, "But the Indians don't proliferate." And they say, "Well, we no longer proliferate." But it takes a while to get over that.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: So to return to my last period there, we've been talking about '97, the Taliban is in power in Afghanistan. They're moving northward. They've taken about 85% of the country. When you go and talk to the Pakistanis about it, they say a couple of things. They had a coordinator for Afghanistan whom we knew well, Iftikhar Murshed, and who would kind of brief us on where they were about things. He wasn't a great source because he didn't have a lot of authority. My message to the Army, to my friend the Chief of Army Staff, was that what you're doing in Afghanistan is a recipe for endless war. Because even if the Taliban took 100% of Afghanistan, their neighbors would not allow them to rest in peace. They would not allow them to enjoy the fruits of their conquest. Uzbekistan, Russia, Iran just wouldn't let it happen. I mean they would keep provoking civil war, so you'd have to live with it. Well, his answer was basically that "We're alone in the world. We have no choice but to support these people." And the subtext was that they're a Pashtun government in Kabul.

Q: When you're talking about Pakistan, then you really have to go to a subset of Pashtuns.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: I mean this --

SIMONS: Yeah, because it's on both sides of the border. It's unruly, it's hard to govern, always has been: it was for the British, it is for the Pakistanis. And they can't afford to, you know, to be hostile -- to have a hostile Pashtun government in Kabul. So they have to stay with these guys. I think that actually there was an element of prevarication both under Benazir and under Nawaz. Because my idea, based on our intelligence and the fact that Afghanistan is awash in weapons after the war against the Soviets, was that the Pakistani support of the Taliban was really not very military, not very much military. They may have been giving some advice, but what they were mainly providing the Taliban was aircraft fuel supplied by Saudi Arabia, in big balloons up on the frontier, and subsidized wheat. And there were special arrangements for that, and so I was always pressing them to squeeze down on aircraft fuel and on subsidized wheat.

Q: What would they use aircraft fuel for?

SIMONS: Well, they have planes.

Q: Did they have --

SIMONS: You know, they had planes left over from the war against the Soviets.

Q: Ah.

SIMONS: But it turns out in retrospect, and after I left one learned, that actually the Pakistanis were doing a good deal of military support too. So there was a little bit of pulling wool over eyes involved. I don't think it would have changed the situation much had I --

Q: While you were there, was there any -- was al-Qaeda any sort of something that came across our radar?

SIMONS: Yeah. Well, because Osama came across our radar. Osama bin Laden returned to Jalalabad – after we had him kicked out of the Sudan -- in 1996. Jalalabad is a city in Eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border. And by the time he sought refuge there, after leaving Sudan, it was not yet controlled by the Taliban. But the Taliban, as they moved north in September, took Jalalabad. He then moved closer to their leadership in Kandahar and began funding them. And the Taliban as a bunch of backwoods Muslims cared very little about economics. They were actually not very interested in governing. They were interested in making people grow beards and making women cover themselves and closing schools for women, but they weren't very interested in governing, which is how you get into a drug culture, but also how you appreciate someone like Osama bin Laden, who is willing to come up with tens of maybe hundreds of millions of dollars to support this movement. There are also rumors that he had developed a family relationship with Mullah Omar, the so-called Amir al-Mu'minin, Commander of the Faithful, as the Taliban call him, that they had children who had married each other. I mean I've never seen that totally confirmed, but that was out there too. Osama of course is very different from Taliban: he's a Middle Eastern purifier and simplifier, rather than a Deobandi, rather than a South Asian. But there's an overlap in terms of purification and simplification of the religion and the importance you attach to the religion, and so they became closer and closer. And after a while I think they kind of became inseparable. I mean it was after my time. My time ended with his attacks on our East African Embassies in early August of 1998.

Q: In Dar es Salaam, yeah.

SIMONS: In Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. Because at that point, well I'm actually getting -- well, I'll talk about it. Because we started tracking him, trying to track him, soon after his return in 1996. The Taliban then took Kabul, they were in charge, and he was developing a closer and closer relationship. We had to reconstitute assets in order to track

him in Afghanistan, because we had none when he came back. So that was one of the efforts of the CIA. It was a minor strand of what they were doing, because they were mainly engaged in following the nuclear program. But they had a strand of effort of tracking bin Laden. I had good relations with my Station Chief, and he kept me, you know, wonderfully well informed. I mean all I needed to know; not everything, but I think all I needed to know, including the fact that we were trying to develop capabilities for tracking Osama. It meant in some cases going back to people that we'd worked with 10 years before during the war who were of course 10 years older and 10 years less vigorous. It also involved at a certain point trying to get people into the country from Uzbekistan.

Q: Osama was of interest to us?

SIMONS: Oh, he was, yes. We considered him a danger. That's why we got him kicked out of Sudan, which may have been a strategic mistake. I mean the Sudanese have always said, "You'd have been better off if he were here and we were taking care of him than you were when he went to Afghanistan and became an engine of the Taliban." They gave him a safe haven where he could operate almost without supervision and build up the capability that led to the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. So we were trying to get him. But every time -- I understand in retrospect, from reading Steve Coll's Ghost Wars, which is the best source on all of this with extensive interviews including me -- every time we got data or information that would have allowed us to target bin Laden and maybe get to him, either the information was not fresh and accurate enough, or we still suffered from the hangover of the Church years and the Hart years against assassination. I mean you had some of that even when we ended up getting him in Abbottabad two years ago. You know, it's a political constraint against assassination by the government, and we're still fighting it, over the use of drones, over killing Americans. So it's still an issue, and it's good that it's an issue, I think. But it certainly kept them from getting Osama when it would have been easier to get him in Afghanistan. So that was kind of background there.

And after the East Africa Embassy bombings, they had a bomber who came through Karachi, and the Pakistanis got him and gave him to us. And one of the last things I did was arrange for his return to Kenya where we could take him in hand. I then drew down the Embassy by two-thirds. We had to rent planes. I remember we rented an Air Canada plane and shipped out two-thirds of the people, mainly women and children. The woman who's now Senior Director in the NSC for the Russia and Central Asia, Alice Wells, that I'm working with on Central Asia (in 2013), I remember her at the airport with her two babies. She was in the Political Section learning Urdu at the time, and we sent her back to the States. I remember Gary Schroen's wife and their dogs getting on the plane. So that was kind of the end of it.

And then I was retiring. I had a contract at Stanford, and the Department had no other jobs for me that I wanted. Bill Milam, my designated successor, was on a leisurely, leisurely trajectory. He'd been chief of mission in Liberia, as Charge, and he was going to go back and prepare and stuff. Strobe Talbott -- and I was there -- swore him in in

London, in the Embassy in London, in order to get him out to Islamabad to replace me. And I think he had a productive tour there.

What happened in between was of course the nuclear explosions of May 1998, and I think I'll probably finish with that. As I've said, the issue that made us care about Pakistan in any serious way at all was the nuclear issue. (Turning from the nuclear issue to bin Laden was turning a page in our history.) Not all but most of our intelligence assets were concentrated on it. The one thing that brought the U.S. Government up alive and would bring Sandy Berger to Islamabad in the first month of my tenure was the Pakistani nuclear program. And then we were worried about the Indian program too. Just before I came we got intelligence information that the Indians were going to explode. This was in '95. And Frank Wisner mobilized a kind of an international campaign to keep them from doing it. And they did refrain from doing it. But by 1998, with the BJP winning an election and coming to power at the head of a coalition, a nuclear explosion was in their platform, and they exploded: in retrospect, not a super-successful explosion, but an explosion. And our job then became to try to prevent the Pakistanis from following suit. We knew much more about their program than we knew about the Indian program because we'd had better relations. That's one of the penalties: when you have good relations with the Americans they know a lot about you. And so we knew, it turned out kind of to the day, how long it was going to take them to get ready to explode out there in Baluchistan in Chagai Hills. And so we set to work to convince them to hold off.

When the Indians exploded I was on vacation in Bukhara in Uzbekistan, and I spent an extra day visiting Tamerlane's tomb in Samarqand before they absolutely ordered me back to Islamabad. I took three planes. The first was from Tashkent to Sharjah in the Gulf, and it was full of hookers, Slavic and Central Asian hookers with their pimps, going to the Gulf. Then I went from Sharjah to Karachi, and that plane was full of businessmen. And then I went from Karachi to Islamabad, in a plane full of bureaucrats like me, just in time to shave at the military airport as the U.S. official plane with Strobe Talbott and his team rolled onto the runway. And we went into meetings trying to convince the Pakistanis not to explode.

It was very clear that Nawaz Sharif had no appetite for a nuclear explosion. As he said to us, "I wish we could drop these bombs into the Arabian Sea." But he was under tremendous pressure from his hawks, and it was a nationalist government. The Islamists were certainly on board because it was very anti-Indian to explode. And so Talbott went home and got to work trying to put together a package of carrots and sticks, incentives and disincentives, that would keep the Pakistanis from it. I kept in touch with all the instances. I remember a conversation with Nawaz Sharif's brother, who was Governor of Punjab, Shabhaz Sharif, whom I'd worked with well. And I said, "You know, Shabhaz, you're finally paying the price, the penalty for 50 years of not educating your people. Because this is rampant nationalism, it's chauvinism out of control." And he said, "You're right." But they were under that pressure. The key meeting, the Chief of Army Staff (later) told me, was on the 21st of May in Lahore, which is Nawaz Sharif's home base. It was organized by the Minister of Religious Affairs, and there came to meeting a bunch of nationalists including Majid Nizami, the old-time owner and leader of

Pakistan's great nationalist newspaper chain, Jang. Jang means war; so Pakistani's greatest Urdu paper's named "War." The Nation is an English-language version. And in that meeting he evidently screamed at Nawaz Sharif, "If you don't explode, we're going to explode you." So probably by the time we got our package together the die had already been cast.

But we came in with it the night of the 27th. We gave it to them in Washington, and I got a copy and took it into the Prime Minister's residence the next morning, just as everyone was meeting to decide, for the decision. I think the decision had probably already been taken. But I waited out there by myself while my paper was passed in. I later asked the Chief of Army staff what his impression had been. He said, "I told the Prime Minister that this is very, very substantial; these are very substantial assurances from the United States." Because the military's position, which I also kept track of, was that it was for the Prime Minister to decide. You know, they were --

Q: It really wasn't the --

SIMONS: It really was not the military pushing for it. They weren't sure it was a good thing. I mean because they--

Q: Well, how were they -- I mean in a way you've got two military institutions that have fought three wars, I guess, or whatever it was, sitting next to each other with that unresolved issue. One side has an atomic weapon, the other side could have it, and that would put it back to status quo.

SIMONS: Well, that was part of the logic. That was surely part of the logic. But in terms of Pakistani politics, you know, the President at this point was a figurehead of Nawaz Sharif. So he didn't play as part of the troika. So it was really the Prime Minister and the Chief of Army Staff. And the Chief of Army Staff, you know, believed that Pakistan had outgrown military rule. He believed Pakistan had developed too much for the military to run things. Of course the next year the military came back into power for another nine years. But anyway, his view was that Pakistan was too sophisticated, too complex for the military to run. And running things also didn't help the military, whose job was to defend against the military threats, not to run the country. In other words, the political responsibility is bad for the military's core mission.

Q: It always is.

SIMONS: Yeah. And so his position, the Army's position -- although there were people in the Army who were rabid for explosion -- but the military's position for Nawaz was that he had to take the decision, and we will do whatever you decide and support you. So I think that's progress in terms of democracy. I mean, you know, it didn't take, because it was 2008 before they returned to democracy, and now it's 2013, and the government elected in 2008 has just completed its term in office for the first time in Pakistan's history. So there's a basis for democracy of some kind in that country, and it showed then.

But then of course they exploded, and we applied sanctions. We applied sanctions to both India and Pakistan, and as in 1965, because Pakistan is smaller, our sanctions hurt them worse, which the Pakistanis remember. But then began two long processes. One process had us kind of going with the flow and learning to live with the fact that these two countries were nuclear weapon states even though they had not signed the non-proliferation treaty. And we're now -- we've been working with that ever since. I mean we've developed a new relationship with India. But it's a relationship still based on that exception. And after 2011 we developed a new relationship with Pakistan because of the War on Terror. But it's not quite that all is forgiven: we still don't approve of their being nuclear weapons states --

Q: You know, well you have to -- I mean what are you going to do?

SIMONS: That's right.

Q: I mean in all these things, the practical eventually wins over the theoretical.

SIMONS: It depends. But what has happened in the meantime is for India and Pakistan -- and again, this is after the time I'm being interviewed about – it took them four long years and coming very close to war before each figured out what it meant to be a nuclear weapon state. In other words, it was not automatic. It was not simply the acquisition of nuclear weapons that made the strategic situation in South Asia stable.

First, it gave them the courage to negotiate. That was during Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in February 1999. It then gave the Pakistanis the courage to be stupid, by occupying those heights at Kargil above the Indian supply lines in Kashmir during the winter while the Indians had withdrawn. And the Indians responded by driving uphill in the spring of 1999, and really giving every sign that they were going to go over into Pakistani hill territory and really start a war, to the point where Nawaz Sharif had to flee to Washington on July 4th, 1999, and get a very flimsy assurance of personal interest in Kashmir from President Clinton, as his cover to pull the troops back. So they were very close to war there. Then after 9/11 -- well, after 9/11, in December, Musharraf, by then the military dictator, turned against the Taliban, but he also wanted to continue to support the Kashmir freedom fighters and the Islamist organizations that had havens in Pakistan. And they were afraid of losing his support, so they attacked the Indian Parliament in Delhi in December of 2001.

Q: What did they think they were going to get out of that?

SIMONS: War between India and Pakistan, which would force the Pakistanis back into full-hearted support for the --

Q: Was there the thought in everybody's mind that the nuclear weapons are such that they won't be used, so we can still have a nice little war without --

SIMONS: Oh yeah. A lot of people felt that nuclear weapons will never be used. Even though Pakistani doctrine, like our doctrine during the Cold War, is that if the integrity of the country is being threatened in a conventional war, we reserve the right to use nuclear weapons. That was the U.S. doctrine during the Cold War because of Soviet conventional superiority. Well, that's still the Pakistani doctrine today (and for the analogous reason). But these guys, I mean these freedom fighters, who were now afraid of losing their meal ticket and their political support, wanted to provoke a war that would force the Pakistan government to firm up its support. India mobilized 750,000 men up on those hills against a quarter of a million Pakistanis. A million men eyeball-to-eyeball on high alert for 10 months. That's dangerous. And we, as an unsung accomplishment of the first Bush 43 Administration, we organized a worldwide diplomatic effort to keep that from happening. I mean we had people going into both Delhi and Islamabad through that whole year of 2002 saying don't pull the trigger, don't, you know, don't do it. And finally, they figured out ways to justify stand-down politically.

But the key outcome of that crisis, which was a very dangerous crisis because they were both nuclear and didn't know what it means to be nuclear, was that they learned. Indian elites finally -- large chunks of them, I mean there are still outliers who talk about limited war -- but most Indian elites came to the conclusion, which is the right conclusion, that threatening Pakistan with a conventional war or fighting a conventional war against Pakistan is of no strategic advantage to India. I mean they don't want more Muslims, and they can't take all of Pakistan. So don't start. The Pakistanis, I think, came to the conclusion, which is -- and there are still outliers who think they can bleed India on Kashmir – but most of the Pakistanis, I think including the military, came to the conclusion, which is the right conclusion, that fighting a sub-conventional war against India in Kashmir, you know, fighting a guerrilla war using freedom fighters in Kashmir, is of no strategic interest to Pakistan. Because they're not going to take it back that way. And it's like the Northern Irish. I mean if they can get to, to -- what do they call it -- the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 -- you know, I was in Poland when the insurgency broke out in 1969 in Northern Ireland, so it took almost 30 years before they got to the point where the Catholics decided they can pursue their goals better through negotiations than through guerrilla warfare -- that would be the hope for Kashmir. At that point I left and went to Stanford.

Q: OK. Just briefly, but I'd like to just sample, what were your impressions of the use of your experiences in the academic context? I mean, did you find that you were able to pass on to another generation the importance of diplomacy and Foreign Service work? Or was there much interest?

SIMONS: I think it helped. I think it helps now. I mean I haven't taught since 2010, but I will teach again. And one of the things that students appreciate is that I was there, and, you know, that I had personal experience with large policy issues, with how complex things are, with how difficult it is to get anything done. And with the possibility of helping good things happen, or helping avoid bad things. And I taught at Stanford, I taught there four years, co-taught with the Professor who brought me there, a course on "The International System since 1914." And really, my big part -- I did the '20s, since he

didn't know anything about that, but my big part of course was the Cold War. And the kids really appreciated hearing from someone who had been there. Sometimes I would get a little too detailed, because for them the Cold War was recent history. Vietnam was already ancient history. The Cold War was recent history, but it was still, you know, a little remote and exotic for them.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: So to have somebody who'd been doing these things, who had the evidence that it's possible to have positive change and it's possible for individuals like me to have a modest but positive affect, that was a good lesson. They appreciated that. They liked that. And they also tend to believe you more. Even when you're talking about stuff that you don't know much about -- because I taught courses in Islamic history out there, mainly to learn about them myself; I mean I've become an expert, some kind of expert, but I wasn't then -- they tend to believe you more because you'd been out there in the real world. So it's an advantage in academia too. In academia -- well, first of all, the kids like theory because they have no life experience. And professors like theory because they can juggle with concepts. And they also usually have no life experience in the political world.

Q: I think this is the root of why Marxism has had such a pervasive effect in so many academic institutions worldwide, including the United States for so long.

SIMONS: Yeah.

Q: It's a great theory. It just doesn't work (laughs) -- didn't work.

SIMONS: Yeah, no, but it lifts the heart. I mean it's an even more perverse situation now, because Marxism has faded almost everywhere, at least in the developed world, except in the United States, because you had a congeries of people who were taken up with Marxism in the '60s, who came into the universities and who got tenure, and who were just now starting to retire.

Q: Yeah.

SIMONS: But it's almost an island in the world academia, the United States. And it's paradoxical, because we're a country that has never been Marxist, I mean it's never had the basis for a socialist movement, a broad socialist movement. Anyway, coming from public service helped, and it continues to help. And I'll try to keep it up.

End of interview