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

AMBASSADOR JOHN WOLF

Interviewed by: Kenneth Brown
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Q: This is Kenneth Brown conducting an interview on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training with Ambassador John Wolf. John, welcome. I assume you go by John.

WOLF: I do.

Q: OK. Let's start off with when and when you were born.

WOLF: Philadelphia, September, 1948.

Q: 1948. And did you stay -- did your family stay in Philadelphia for a long time after that? Did you grow up in Philadelphia?

WOLF: I grew up in Philadelphia, my mother and father lived there until my father's death, and my mother lived there until her death in 2013. In fact, she was born there.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family background, their families and then on up to, you know, your own association with the family.

WOLF: My father was born in Pittsburgh, moved to Atlantic City, grew up in Atlantic City, and eventually went off to Dartmouth College, then Harvard for law school. With the exception of three and a half years when he went to Washington during World War II, he was a lawyer in Philadelphia from 1940 until 1974 when he died. My mother was born in Philadelphia. She grew up in Philadelphia. She went to Goucher College in Baltimore, and then returned to Philadelphia when she was married. She stayed in Philadelphia and she lived within 10 miles of where she grew up for her whole life.

Q: What about sort of the ancestry? Let's start with your father's side. Tell me a little bit about his family background.

WOLF: That's a little bit vague.

Q: Well, OK (laughs).

WOLF: That's a little bit vague, but his parents, at some point, came from Eastern Europe. They lived in Pittsburgh, where my father was born, then moved to Atlantic City.

They died a *long* time ago, I think before my father was married. His mother died -- my grandmother I guess -- died I think in the '40s. My mother's family came from Germany. And they had been in Philadelphia for several generations. My mother's father was a hat maker in Philadelphia. Hats were a big thing. My mother used to tell stories about going to Atlantic City for the Easter Parade where her father would stand proudly on the sidelines and say, "That's my hat. That's my hat. That's my hat." Interestingly, one of my father's clients was Hat Corporation of America. So, my father, who almost never accepted gifts from clients, did wear a hat. The Hat Corporation gave him two Tyrolean hats, which he wore -- and they replaced the periodically. The only other gifts he took were those awful, annual Horn & Hardart Christmas cakes. They used to sit around on a counter until Easter and then we'd throw them away.

Q: So you came along in 1948

WOLF: I came along in 1948, the second of two children. I have a brother who was born in 1946.

Q: Brother is older. What is he doing?

WOLF: He's a lawyer.

Q: What was family life like -- family life like for you --

WOLF: It was pretty relaxed.

Q: -- growing up in Philadelphia?

WOLF: We were middle-class, upper middle-class I suppose, in suburban Philadelphia. My parents were socially very involved in the community.

My father used to go into Philadelphia by train every day at the same hour on the same train, and he came home at the same hour, on the same train. We had family dinner together most *every* night. And then my father would usually go off to a meeting (he was on a number of civic and non-profit boards), or he'd work in his office upstairs, or he'd fall asleep on the couch in the living room. I've taken up the sleeping on the couch routine. It's a very honorable pursuit.

My mother was busy *all day* doing a dozen, different volunteer projects. She was intensely interested in issues related to education. She (like was my father) was very active in the United Way (both were vice-chairman at one point or another) and in the Federation of Jewish Agencies. One of my mother's favorite programs -- one of the ones of which she was most proud -- was an art program she initiated in the Philadelphia School System for elementary school students -- Art Within Touch. We used to have a bunch of statues that she had collected -- statues of elephants and kangaroos and birds, busts (peoples' heads) and stuff like that that she used to cart around in the back of her car and set up in elementary schools in northeast Philadelphia. She'd set the exhibit up

and when the kids came in she'd encourage them to close their eyes and feel the statuary, to use their imaginations. Since neither the kids nor even many of the teachers had exposure to art (and travel), this was a way to give them new experiences. And she supplemented the statuary with pictures she took whenever she traveled -- and she traveled a lot!

I went to public school for four years and then I went to Chestnut Hill Academy for the rest of my elementary and secondary education. After CHA, I went on to Dartmouth, I was accepted into the Foreign Service the summer I graduated. So it was privileged upbringing, but my parents showed early that with privilege came responsibility to give back.

Q: Were your parents politically engaged?

WOLF: No.

Q: And so there wasn't much political conversation at these family dinners?

WOLF: Discussions ranged but it wasn't like the Kennedys sitting down to talk about politics or the world. My parents were interesting people and were interested in what was going on in Philadelphia and the world around.

Q: And it was pretty normal in terms of playing with the other kids in the neighborhood and --

WOLF: When first growing up, yes, because I was in a school close enough that I could even ride my bike or walk. I think about that now when I look at my grandchildren; they live a mile and a half from the elementary school. But when they're old enough -- they're unlikely to have the freedom in their suburban neighborhood that I had. Once I went off to Chestnut Hill, I sort of separated from Wyncote, the community I grew up in, and was absorbed in Chestnut Hill.

Q: But you still lived at home.

WOLF: O f course. But we left -- I left home at quarter of eight in the morning and got home 5:30 or six because after school there were always sports, clubs or whatever. And at home there was a pile of homework. Summers I spent in North Carolina.

Q: Were you much of a reader? Were there things that particularly interested you or that you were interested in aside from the homework and --

WOLF: I always read -- I started off with Hardy Boy books and Tom Swift books and Landmark books. You know, "I was there at the Battle of Bataan"; "The Wright Brothers:' etc. I mean I must have had 30 or 40 of those Landmark books -- I loved them and reread them frequently. I read a lot of history and historical biographies -- I still do, plus a lot of "airplane books" (easy fiction).

Q: (laughs)

Q: Did you have an international bent particularly in high school, thinking of things sort of foreign affairs or maybe sort of history of the U.S.? Was it --

WOLF: History of the U.S. And I was a big fan of Winston Churchill. You know, when I grew up, if people said "State Department" it was pretty close to "what state?" My career move to the State Department -- we'll get to that I suppose.

Q: Yes, we will.

WOLF: … this was not a preordained progress to the Foreign Service Test by any stretch of the imagination. I was expecting to go to law school.

Q: OK, before we get that far, so after Chestnut Hill you went off to Dartmouth.

WOLF: Right.

Q: OK. And what did you major in there?

WOLF: English.

Q: English?

WOLF: English and American art, with a number of history courses.

Q: Interesting. Did you take any courses that one might think of as preparatory for a career in the Foreign Service?

WOLF: History and government, and two economics courses. I suppose several of them helped with the written and oral exams.

Q: Tell me -- so after Dartmouth, did you -- what happened next?

Q: At Dartmouth, OK.

WOLF: In my junior/senior year, senior year, I took the Law Boards, Business Boards, and Graduate Record Exams. And I took the Foreign Service Test.

Q: All --

WOLF: Clear sign of a perfect path forward, any path will do.

Q: (laughs) Yeah, right.

WOLF: But I was pretty much determined to go to law school. I got into Georgetown and I sent off my $50 to Georgetown and I'm still on the register. They're waiting for me to show up and matriculate.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: But I also took the Foreign Service Test, just another of the GRE type tests the fall of my senior year. And, that was the last that I really thought about the Foreign Service Test -- I mean about the Foreign Service -- until weeks -- months later? Whatever. I got a notice that I had actually passed this written test. For context, my senior year, 1970, was the first year of the draft lottery, and Vietnam was still a very active war. My draft number was 240 and I remember in the first six months the numbers advanced 30/month. So, while I wasn't real strong on math, it didn't take too much extrapolation to imagine a future in the army and I wasn't really over-eager to be in the infantry in Vietnam. We can come back to that, because it came back again in my first day after my arrival in Perth. Anyway, I kept the Foreign Service process moving ahead, and actually had my oral exam in April, about the same time as the Kent State protests. My classmates were wandering around on the Hill delivering letters and stuff like that. I don't think I actually did that, but I did go to Washington to take the Foreign Service Test. That's a whole chapter in itself, but it was, it was fun.

Q: What do you recall about the oral?

WOLF: It's like it happened yesterday.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

WOLF: So there were three guys -- guys, no women in sight. They had their suits on. And I suppose I had a suit on; I had to get one probably. And we sat at a T-shaped table. They were at the top of the T; I was at the foot of the T. Had a pencil and a yellow legal tablet.

Q: Legal pad, yeah.

WOLF: -- tablet, and a pencil. One of the three introduced himself and said he had gone to Princeton. So you know, Princeton/Dartmouth, we felt intensely about those things back then. I noticed that he spent the whole hour and a half flipping a pencil back and forth across his fingers as he asked questions. I tried it once, but that wasn't one of my interview strengths.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: If that was a talent that you needed in the Foreign Service I didn't have the --

Q: You didn't have it.

WOLF: Anyway, I couldn't figure out what I was going to put on the legal pad -- when they asked a question, I simply launched in. And I didn't put down anything except just towards the end.

WOLF: Before I went to the oral, someone had told me to be careful not to answer questions where I didn't know the subject, 'cause the examiners would have seen through the superficiality. Better to say, "I don't know" and move on. For instance, I do remember one question was something about foreign assistance and the trends and this and that, and what did I think about all that. And I think I said something like, "I don't know a lot about that. I think foreign assistance is going down." That was like a period to that question, and we moved on.

There was another question which was pretty subtle for a Foreign Service officer. They asked my view of British and French involvement in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, when the Red and White armies were moving down from the two ends of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. I asked whether this was a question about the Russian Revolution, or about Vietnam? I told them that Vietnam was a war where I had some reservations, but as for the 1917 operation I was able to draw on a course I was actually then taking to discuss the Russian Revolution. They veered off to the next question.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: The final question, and I've always thought the one that got me into the Foreign Service was, "Suppose you were at a cocktail party and somebody said to you 'America has no culture of its own.' How would you answer that?"

I said earlier my major (and minors I suppose) related to American literature, art and history. So I thought about the question for a minute, took the pencil that was staring up at me and I wrote down on the, on the yellow legal tab in rather large letters, B-U-L-L, dot, dot, dot, dot. And then I answered the question, talking about literature, art, architecture, jazz and this and that. After that I was excused to wait outside while the panel considered. And I was sitting out there in the chair and I thought, "Oh my God, I left the piece of paper!"

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: So I've always believed that, out of curiosity, they wanted to know what was the one thing -- the one memory jogger that I wrote to help answer." Anyway, they passed me, but I've always thought that paper stuck around in my file. Anyway, I got in.

Q: Well, you did indeed, and it sounds as though, however, that you were well prepared for the Foreign Service, but you didn't know a whole lot about what it did. Is that accurate?

WOLF: Oh, I didn't have the slightest idea what it did. I mean, sure, I knew what diplomacy was and I knew -- I mean I had traveled enough, and I remember my brother

had had to go into the embassy in Paris at some point when, after an evening drinking, somebody blotted out his passport picture and he needed an emergency passport so he could get home. And I did a good bit of reading in advance of the oral, but that hardly provided much help in terms of tradecraft.

Q: Did they have cones by then?

WOLF: Yes.

Q: And were they designated cones for --

WOLF: Yes, one chose a cone after the panel indicated pass or fail. And, at the time, I was 21 and I chose the consular cone because I figured, let's be realistic, I didn't have a sophisticated political background, I didn't speak a variety of foreign languages, or have a long work resume… I had been a camp, sailing counselor and worked in the mailroom at a Philadelphia bank, but I didn't think either of those were particularly relevant to the Foreign Service. So I thought, "Well, consular cone I can go to smaller posts, I can do my thing and they will train me." In retrospect that's what happened. I'm not sure that path is available in today's service, but it was a good one for me. Anyway, I made my choice, they put me on the register, and in August invited me to join the Foreign Service, just a weekend before I was scheduled to go to Newport to be sworn in for Naval OCS. (Officer Candidate School).

Q: Had you signed papers?

Q: Well, as, as -- once they chose you for the Foreign Service, did that mean in effect that you wouldn't be drafted?

WOLF: No. But, as it turned out, the numbers stopped at whatever, 200, 210.

Q: And when did the A100 start?

WOLF: August 1970.

Q: And what was the makeup of your A100 course? How many people and --

WOLF: There were like 16 or 18 of us, including USIS.

Q: Not big.

WOLF: This is back when there was real financial stringency.

Q: Ah-ha, mm-hmm.

WOLF: And that included five or six USIS officers, so there were a dozen Foreign Service officers, pretty evenly split among cones as I remember.

Q: Any women?

WOLF: There were four women.

Q: Minorities? Were there any minorities?

WOLF: Two blacks.

What was the course like at that time? Did you find it was good preparation for sort of -- I guess looking back on it was it good preparation for what you were about to be sent out to do?

WOLF: Must have been, I didn't know anything before I went and I did OK once I got there. John Hurley was the course coordinator, a great guy. Later went off and became a priest.

Q: Remember how long it was at that time, because you know they've cut back --

WOLF: I believe it was two or three months.

Q: Mine was 10, 10 weeks. I think it's six weeks now.

WOLF: And then came the consular course.

Q: You took consular training.

WOLF: Which was three or four weeks, I think?

Q: I don't know. All my consular training was sort of out of the manual. Did they have Con-Gen Rosslyn when you took it, which is more practical in terms of the experiences, the training?

WOLF: Yes, I think. It was mostly talking about each aspect of consular work, like visas, passport, and citizens welfare.

WOLF: It was all useful for me, since I then went off to Perth, which was a two-person post. What I couldn't figure out, I needed to check on by calling Sydney -- and I didn't want to do that too often. A lot of times I just played my best hunch.

Q: So you were number two of a two-person post?

WOLF: I guess I was number three because there was a USIS officer who was more senior than I and then, later, there was a person from commerce (from the Department of Commerce). John and Lorraine Lacy were the best possible people with whom to start a Foreign Service career. John Lacy was a gifted Chinese linguist. He used to spend forty-

five minutes every day doing ideograms in his office. He was kind of overpowering for that small post. He was to have been the first ambassador to Singapore. He had been nominated, but then he became ill. So Perth was his sort of rehab assignment. In the end, he didn't get a post and ended up as DCM in Burma. But he and his wife were terrific mentors for Mahela and me.

Q: You got married and brought her back to Perth?

WOLF: Yes. Also in Australia we were blessed to have a terrific Deputy Chief of Mission in Canberra, Hugh Appling.

Q: Well, were you doing in effect all the consular work --

WOLF: Yes, but others things too, admin work, outreach and representation, youth affairs…Mr. Lacey encouraged me to reach out widely.

Q: So Lacey didn't get involved with consular affairs.

WOLF: No. We did have a couple very talented local employees whom I supervised. Mostly it was visa work, including a lot of workers from the mines -- originally from Yugoslavia etc. Few of them qualified for tourist visas to the U.S. Australian applicants were pretty routine…including once a young lady who was traveling to a beauty contest, and came back Miss Universe. Probably, I should have interviewed her beforehand.

The youth stuff was interesting, since the war was unpopular also in Australia. There was an active Labor Party -- and Kim Beazley, Jr. was one of my contacts. His father was a politician, and Kim went on to be defense minister, then ambassador in Washington. But this was West Australia, and politics were pretty tame stuff.

Q: Quite a challenge for somebody who's 22 and brand new to the --

WOLF: I suppose, but Mr. Lacey's approach was, "Go figure it out. If you have questions, come back to me…and he was always there. One vignette -- my second or third week in Perth, he called me to say he was going to a chief of missions meeting in Canberra. I'd be in charge.

Q: Acting principal officer.

WOLF: Acting principal officer. And oh, by the way, Admiral Zumwalt was coming.

Q: (laughs) Coming to Perth while he was gone?

WOLF: Yes.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Just passing through, I mean, it was not a big deal. Except Zumwalt was the Chief of Naval Operations and his logistical requirements were a bit more formidable than we could accommodate at our small post. Anyway, it was pretty cool, and I still have a picture of me greeting him with his Special Air Mission plane (SAM) in the background. However the routine went out the window just before the Admiral arrived since something he said about the Indian Ocean got the Aussie press all revved up. Mr. Appling called me at oh-dark hundred to brief me and give me some talking points for the CNO. When the plane landed, I bounded up the steps, introduced myself as the guy in charge, and told him "There's a small problem that we need to talk about."

To his credit, I mean he didn't blink an eye, just said "Sit down, tell me about it." He listened; I delivered the talking points. He said: "I can deal with that," then walked down, met the press, did exactly whatever was needed, and all was hunky-dory. But for me this was so cool.

Q: I'm sure.

WOLF: Not only was he a four star admiral, he was the head of the Navy!

Q: Well, the -- you had mentioned that -- you had when you were on consular duties, you had someone on the phone, the other end of the line in Sydney. With all of these other duties, did you have any direct contact with the embassy or were you just always reporting to Lacey?

WOLF: With the Embassy, it always was through Lacey. I should complete the Zumwalt story.

Q: Oh yes, please.

WOLF: So, that night he flew off. And, I had this little one-time little steno thing for message encryption. I pulled it out (for the first time) and recorded what he had told me by way of explanation, transposed a bunch of five letter code groups to a telegram form, then took it to the Post Office to send to Canberra, since we had no telex.

Q: Right.

WOLF: 1:00 in the morning, I rang the bell, guy comes to the cage window. I gave him the telegram, which was several paragraphs of gibberish. And he looks at it and he looks at me like, "*What?"* Anyway, off the message went, and early the next morning, the embassy was on the phone saying, "We've got most of this deciphered, but we're having a little trouble *(laughs)*...could you help us?"

It was Australia, so I just read the message over the phone and that was that.

We had another time where I had pretty intensive interaction with Canberra and that was after Mr. Lacey was gone, the commerce guy was in charge, and Secretary Rogers

overnighted in Perth on his way to South Africa. This was a big deal. I mean his list of, his list of needs were *enormous*. I mean pages of this and that -- security, transportation, commo, press etc.

Q: And there were three of you at that point to handle --

WOLF: There were two of us because the USIS officer --

Q: Wasn't there.

WOLF: -- either. And for all intents and purposes, the commerce officer, he says, "This is your secretary, not mine." Anyway, our Australian team was superb. And I had a lot of help from the state government. I had pretty close ties to the civil service head of the Chief Minister's office -- he headed the Civil Service in West Australia; the police commissioner; the head of Special Branch and a whole variety of people who did a lot of the work. The Embassy was good for free advice, but no physical support since they were busy accommodating two cabinet secretaries in Canberra for three days or two days of meetings. When they did send out the admin person from Sydney she worked through the checklist…"Do you have the press stuff? Yep. Do you have the Telex? Yep. Got a car? Yep.

Q: You didn't need her.

WOLF: What are you going to do? Anyway, so he arrives, another cool afternoon, I have that picture too. I remember the 707 glided to a stop right at the red carpet, the State Premier and I met the Secretary, and I introduced him to Mahela then turned to greet EA Assistant Secretary Marshall Greene, then turned to see the Secretary and Mrs. Rogers standing there with no one left on the receiving line…oops..

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: So the rest of them had to get off the plane -- I mean the receiving line broke down really fast.

Q: (laughs) Yeah, I guess so.

WOLF: We grabbed the Secretary and off we went to the Parmelia Hotel where there was a crowd -- small crowd, pretty docile crowd -- to protest the Vietnam War. The protesters mostly were my friends and political contacts.. Anyway, it wasn't a problem, we went inside and the Secretary was very gracious. We talked about Australian wines and this and that. And then they wanted a recommendation for a restaurant and I told him the name of our favorite seafood restaurant in Fremantle, which was, you know, three miles away. Off they all went to this restaurant. The next morning they all got on the plane, but I understood that several of them, perhaps -- I don't know whether the secretary did or didn't, but several of them had intestinal problems. About a month later I got orders transferring me six months early to Vietnam.

Q: That wasn't a link, I hope.

WOLF: So I'm not sure whether there was a link or whether they had a need in Da Nang, but in any event Perth was a terrific place to start, start both a career and a marriage and we made some friendships that have lasted for 40 plus years.

Q: Did you do any other reporting, aside from sort of these --

WOLF: I did usually whenever I took trips around the state, if there was something to write I'd write it up -- as an airgram. Not sure what the readership was!

Q: Mm-hmm, I remember air grams.

WOLF: I doubt if anybody above our desk officer ever read it. Heck, I'd say the same thing when I was ambassador to Malaysia.

Q: So you were there for about 18 months.

WOLF: Eighteen months.

Q: So that carried you to what, about mid '72? No, wait a minute.

WOLF: So, so I went out in '71, and left in the fall of 1972.

Q: And you transferred to Da Nang.

WOLF: To Da Nang directly.

Q: And that was an unaccompanied tour I assume.

WOLF: No, Mahela was with me.

Q: At that time --

WOLF: I remember I was walking down the St George's Terrace talking to Carl Jacobson, the commerce officer. And they were building one of Perth's first major, skyscrapers. I was saying that by the end of my tour (in six months) they would have topped out that building. And I arrived at the consulate to find a telegram saying, "Before transferring to Da Nang, you should request permission as a key new officer on Ambassador Bunker's staff for, Mahela Wolf, spouse, to accompany you to Da Nang."

So the first message was, "Who's going to Da Nang? Wolf has another six months."

Back, “Oh sorry, we forgot. We meant to call before, but…” Eventually my CDO (career development officer) called up and said, “Oh, I’m so sorry, I sent the telegram before we had a chance to call. But I assume you’ll agree to this transfer.”

And you know, I sort of thought about it for all of a second and thought, “Career continues? Career ends.”

Q: Yeah, right.

WOLF: So I said yes -- but apparently two people had said no beforehand.

Q: Really?

WOLF: I guess I wasn't the first choice. And that comes back to when I went to Perth I remember Mr. Lacey had apparently fought against having a young first tour officer. He said, “I need somebody with experience because, I don't want to have to spend all my time supervising.” And I’m not sure they didn't do the same thing in Da Nang. I went, and Mr. Appling, too went off to be the deputy ambassador in Saigon, which was really cool because he had become a friend and mentor.

Q: But he was in -- when he was in Australia as DCM working for the ambassador, who was the ambassador at that time?

WOLF: What was his first name? Walter Rice.

Q: Rice. Was he a political appointee.

WOLF: Yes.

Q: Did he -- but it seemed to be a pretty well run embassy and, and its contacts with the constituent posts were pretty well conducted?

WOLF: I suppose, but my range of vision from Perth was pretty limited.

Q: Yeah, it was above your pay --

WOLF: That was super above my pay grade. I was an FSO-8.

Q: Yeah, so no great --

WOLF: I was one of six professionals diplomats in West Australia, which made me an object of curiosity.

Q: (laughs) Well, when did they change the rules about families being able to go to Viet Nam?

WOLF: Most families were not there. They were safe havened in Bangkok. But Mike Owens, who was my predecessor in Da Nang, had his wife Jane with him. I guess Da Nang was a reasonably safe place. Some of the AID (Agency for International Development) spouses were there as well.

Q: So if you were willing to --

WOLF: If you had no -- I mean there were no children.

Q: Yeah, no, yeah, OK.

Q: Well, did -- but when having spouses come to a place like Da Nang, they weren't requiring that the spouses be employed there at the post?

WOLF: Mahela had worked as a teacher in Australia, but there were no schools and no military schools or anything in which to teach in Da Nang. So she helped to run the commissary and she volunteered -- she taught English to Vietnamese women.

Q: But it wasn't a requirement --

WOLF: No.

Q: -- to be allowed to be at post.

WOLF: No, no, no, no.

Q: Because that's essentially -- I hadn't realized that that would have been permitted at that time.

Q: So you didn't get home leave.

WOLF: Between Australia, no, I was deferred. I went as a direct transfer We flew to Hong Kong for a couple of days. And then we got on an Air France plane. I remember walking down the steps at Tan Son Nhut only to see smoke rising at the end of the runway. Mahela stayed onboard, since she was going to the US to be naturalized before coming back to Viet Nam (She was Trinidadian by birth).

Q: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

WOLF: I was taken in by Josiah Bennett? Do you remember --

Q: I remember the name.

WOLF: He was the minister counselor for political affairs, and Mrs. Bennett was his spouse -- what a whirling dervish she was. She was my hostess for those first days in

Vietnam, while I was going into the embassy, but the rest of the time she was taking me around. She had been born in China. She was the daughter of a Mandarin family and she then married and moved off to the U.S. But she was just this dynamic, probably tiger mom.

Q: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

WOLF: I remember that was a great way to start. And then I went off to Da Nang and Fred Brown -- did you know Fred?

Q: Yes.

WOLF: And Fred Brown was the consul and, you know, I couldn't have asked for a better consul. Fred was *amazing*. And again, very helpful.

Q: How many people at post?

WOLF: You mean how many Foreign Service people at post?

Q: Well, who made up Da Nang?

WOLF: So there were Fred Brown, Craig Dunkerley, one Foreign Service secretary, and me. There was an AID CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) mission and there was a very large regional affairs office.

Q: Mm-hmm.

WOLF: And there was still a residual military presence when I got there.

Q: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

WOLF: Marines? A few army on our side of the river, and I believe Marines across the river.

WOLF: I arrived in Viet Nam right after the US election -- indeed the day Dr. Kissinger announced "Peace is at hand." (I had the chance to joke with him many years later that I was pretty certain he was not referring to me).

Shortly after the ceasefire, the consulate was upgraded, and Fred became the consul general. We moved into what was known as "the White Elephant" which had been the AID mission right on the riverfront. So we had this amazing combined mission, with all kinds of resources, including aircraft, helicopters, and even two beach houses on what then was known as "China Beach."

Q: And a beach house.

WOLF: Actually the regional affairs guys' house was nicer, and they had Filipino FSNs working for them, supremely good cooks. They'd host weekly cook-outs where they'd roast a pig or whatever. Parties with those guys was great because when you'd show up at a party at their core house, you know, in the front room there was like a square coffee table and people were asked to deposit their weapons.

Q: (laughs) There'd be a pile of --

WOLF: A pile of all kinds of guns, rifles, whatever.

Q: Sounds like the Old West.

WOLF: It was, it was Da Nang.

Q: And what were your responsibilities?

WOLF: So I the consular officer; in addition I was responsible for the U.S. contractors who back-filled as the military departed.

Q: American contractors.

WOLF: American contractors, they managed communications and a variety of other things for the Vietnamese. This was new territory for me, but the Embassy left me to work out coordination procedures. I do recall tho' one visit by the U.S. Brigadier General in charge. At a point, we needed him to come and crack heads, which he did. I did the consular work, which was largely protection work and a few visas -- often for fiancés of soldiers. I remember too that was the first time I saw somebody deceased when I was doing citizen protection work, collecting and protecting his possessions--

Q: First time in your life to have seen some --

WOLF: First time in my life. Fortunately, there weren't that a lot of those cases, but I graphically remember that room. There was a lot of work related to adoptions and registrations of births. Registration of births was pretty difficult because you had to do a certain amount of detective work to establish the validity of the claim. And if I'm not mistaken decisions may have been approved in Saigon or Washington because it was pretty controversial stuff.

Q: These were usually military with Vietnamese women?

WOLF: Yes. We also did a very limited amount of visa work, mostly immigrant visas. Every case was complicated and I had a great resource in Saigon, Laurie Peters, who provided a lot of telephone support. We also issued a few non-immigrant visas, mostly to third country contractors who wanted to go to the United States and generally didn't qualify, and fiancés generally from departed soldiers…they required scrutiny since a

number of these arrangements were shams. “How long have you known Cp’l xxx…fifteen minutes!”

As in Perth, where there were a variety of third country nationals who applied for visas, but didn’t qualify under the Immigration and Nationality Act presumption of intending resident.

Q: Going to be a detour along the way.

WOLF: It was really complicated in Da Nang. Fraud was rampant. So my daily caseload was a consular work, a little bit of contact work, like with people who ran operations on the pier -- a little bit of political work, but Craig Dunkerley was the political officer and, with his Vietnamese, he did most of the substantive stuff. Mine was mostly just networking in order to be more effective when I needed to find somebody who could help with whatever.

Q: Then you didn't get involved on the reporting side?

WOLF: I didn't do a whole lot of reporting. One substantive thing I did do was the post E&E plan (emergency and evacuation)…that was the real deal, and a plan that the post had to use several years later as Da Nang was falling to the North Vietnamese. I remember one, early iteration suggested we use helicopters flying from the courtyard of the consulate general. That idea was shelved quickly when the military liaison reminded me that helicopters have a transition time, after they rise and before they move laterally, and that our helicopters would be an easy target. We settled on boats down the Han River.

After I had been at post for about 10 months we had corralled the contractors and things were working pretty well. Also, the consular work had fallen off to nearly nothing -- except I still was doing a *lot* of authentications. In the old days, you know, you used to authenticate that it was the signature of a foreign, qualified foreign official.

Q: Exactly.

WOLF: And you used to do it in like 10 copies, you’d sign them all. And I just remember that, as my workload -- as all the other things sort of tapered off or disappeared, the authentication work continued *relentlessly* to the point where I’d be sitting in my sandbagged office with no windows, sitting behind a big desk that we had commandeered from the army when they left Viet Nam. My consular assistant would come in and hand me piles of authentications, but I was so starved to do work and I’d start signing quickly. And I actually got down from John S. Wolf to John Wolf to J. Wolf to JW to J-line. That would cut the stack of these things to 30-40 seconds of work, but then I’d think to myself, “Great, I’ve done my whole morning’s work,” *(laughs).* It’s about then that I started lobbying for a transfer, pointing out that what the post needed was another reporting officer, somebody who spoke Vietnamese. French was not exactly that they wanted to speak in Central Vietnam. Eventually the director-general visited Da Nang on a tour of

the new consulates and Fred let me host the DG for lunch so that I'd have a chance to lobby him after lunch when I was driving back to the consulate general. Good that it was on the way to the consulate vs. return, because when I was returning home a tire fell off my Jeep and I ended up in a drainage ditch. It probably would not have helped my case if the DG had been there, but he wasn't. Anyway, the effort paid off and a few weeks later we were transferred off to Athens.

Q: Well, was your work there -- because you mentioned the sandbagged office -- was your work there very much affected in terms of security, in terms of --

WOLF: It was constant. You could drive in the city, but if I went for instance to Hoi An one of my consular assistants would drive, and I remember he use to keep a loaded revolver under a pillow on the front seat. We couldn't drive north to Hue. When we went to there, we went in one of our short-landing/take-off aircraft. That recalls my one war story -- well there are several war stories, but my only close escape… Mahela and I were up in Hue looking at the imperial capital which had been badly damaged in the 1968 Tet offensive. The royal palace was in bad shape. We flew up and stayed at the AID compound. The compound had a tall radio mast right in the center of it. And that night as we were sleeping in our trailer the Viet -- North Vietnamese or Vietcong or whoever it lobbed three or four rockets at the encampment. And they used the mast as their aiming point, so --

Q: Oh Lord.

WOLF: -- the rockets landed 40 or 50 feet away, on the street just outside the compound and on the street. One killed several Vietnamese. I remember when the first rocket hit we were asleep. But as we had been briefed on what to do, so we dashed out to one of the revetments they used as bomb shelters. When we got there, and it was only a few seconds, we found an AID guy there who had on his Flak jacket and his boots were laced up, he had a helmet.

But one of the two -- one of my two or three best Foreign Service memories came from Vietnam…fast forward 20 years and I was going out to be ambassador to Malaysia. I was being briefed at the Pentagon after a luncheon they had hosted. Back in the early '90s they did briefings in a dark room using viewgraphs in place of Power-Points. I was falling asleep. It was like an after lunch class and I was kind of dozing, but I vaguely heard from the back of the room someone speaking about how 20 years before, a young vice consul in Da Nang…had helped his wife and him to adopt their Vietnamese orphan daughter. And he was said, "I just wanted to come today to say thank you."

Q: Oh.

WOLF: -- Special moment!

Q: That's a nice story.

WOLF: And I've always remembered that. You know, in the Foreign Service we say we think about a lot of big things, and I suppose we do sometimes. But also among our stakeholders are people like those whom I helped, people who every day turn to State. I had a chance to do something that changed a family's lives. We made a difference, and Foreign Service officers do that every day in ways that maybe only they knew. And it had taken me 20 years before I realized it -- I mean I had a few tears in my eyes because I thought this is what we do, this is why it was such a great career.

Q: At the end of our careers I think we look back and say, "Did I make a difference?" And that's a clear example, your case, where you did.

WOLF: Yes. It happened in 1973? So I was 25-years-old. So you know, for me that was cool.

Q: Well, that's, that's a good example of what a consul does. You also mentioned your experience with the first dead body, and I remember mine as well. Were there other cases, sort of consular cases, either in Perth or Da Nang that sort of stand out in your mind? Sort of things you had to deal with as a consular officer?

WOLF: Perth. Not in Perth. I mean people got locked up and, and we got 'em out of the lock-up --

Q: I'm sure they were glad to see you.

WOLF: I suppose. As I said, in Vietnam, there were a number of other things, adoptions and recordings of U.S. citizens' birth that that we did. There was one other story that didn't have quite the same happy ending. I mentioned Mahela taught English to Vietnamese women. And she became good friends with a young lady whom she was teaching. After Vietnam fell, the woman's husband, who was in the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam), was rounded up -- I think she got out on the last plane or a boat or whatever. But he ended up in a re-education camp and it was only some years later that he was reunited with her in France. So --

Q: They did get back together.

WOLF: They did get back together eventually. But that was one of countless stories about the war's messy end. We felt badly about our friends, but there were thousands of people left behind, many who had worked for the US. I was in the Operations Center on the night that Saigon fell. And I remember Washington was frantically messaging Ambassador Martin to leave, but he was trying to get as many people out as possible, until finally the Secretary Kissinger told him "Get out" ('cause delay was causing inordinate risk to the American troops running the evacuation.)

Q: Well, Da Nang later became quite a hotspot at that time, didn't it? I mean after you left.

WOLF: Well, when we were there it was really quite safe -- in the city. There were three divisions around the city. And it was not until 1975, in the spring, when they pulled one of the divisions out of the line, that it created a big hole, and the North Vietnamese swept through, straight down to Saigon. But I remember our house -- our next-door neighbor was General Trong who was the core commander or area commander -- he was the military officer in charge of Military Region 1. So, his house was protected by a reinforced squad and tank. The mayor was right behind us. He was protected by a similar group. And then on the other side of us was a family of American Baptist Missionaries. And we always knew that if the end came maybe the right way to go was towards the missionaries as opposed to the two places where the ARVN was. The city was 5-6 miles from the airbase. It was regularly rocketed. They rarely rocketed our part of the city. But, every night, we heard rockets or artillery on the other side of the hills. We had a radio in the bedroom, one of those big military style radios that was constantly on…and all nights we'd hear the Consulate General's marine guards warning re various threats. The SOP (standard operating procedure) was if they said -- "Players" (group name for ConGen employees) -- there's an attack underway we were supposed to go into our reinforced bunker. The trouble with our reinforced bunker was it was the porch off of our bedroom. While it had been sandbagged and reinforced on the sides, they left the glass door --

Q: Oh Lord (laughs).

WOLF: Just put some tape. So --

Q: Where was Mylar when you need it?

WOLF: So, our SOP was rolling under the bed, which seemed a lot safer.

Q: Was that from where Terry McNamara evacuated the --

WOLF: He was the consul general in Da Nang, and yes he took a boat down the river and out into the harbor where I think the Navy picked them up

Q: I think he had to sort of scramble to assemble a little bit of a convoy. We've got his account you might be interested in.

WOLF: I returned to Da Nang in 2012 for the first time since the fall of South Vietnam. It was a remarkable experience. I started out in Hanoi staying at the Metropole Hotel. I was actually there on the day that they were commemorating reopening of hotel's wartime bomb shelter. And they were very proud that this was the place where Jane *Fonda* and other American activists used to take cover from American bombers over Hanoi. They asked me if I wanted to attend. I passed on it. The next day, I went to Da Nang and I went to 12 Le Than Ton, which was where our house was. But the whole block, indeed whole city, was transformed. There were seven new bridges across the river and on the China Beach side, on the ocean side, the whole area had been developed with industrial estates, and resorts, including golf courses. And downtown Da Nang looked much, much, much different. There were no refugees sleeping in the streets; there'd been

400,000 when we were there. And our street had been completely redeveloped; six properties had been turned into a dozen or 16 properties. And when you stood outside of our gate it was a little shop store -- shop downstairs and house upstairs.

Q: Is there anything you want else to say about Da Nang before we move on?

WOLF: I was glad to have done my tour in Vietnam. As you'll recall, for a generation of Foreign Service officers, service in Vietnam in essence checked a box. But it was more than just that. I think it was valuable to have seen up close what was a seminal moment for a generation of Americans. I realized that there were many thousands of people who were trying very hard to make our effort work. Perhaps it was misplaced idealism, or indeed misplaced realpolitik. But whatever our many motivations, clearly there the Vietnamese on whom we depended weren't working hard enough. So the message is you can't lift up by the bootstraps somebody who doesn't like wearing boots.

But, during our time there, we worked with many interesting people, well intentioned -- good people. And we left friends behind. And the interesting thing was to go back 40 years later because very little of what we feared in the Seventies had happened. Yes, there was a communist government, but I spent some time talking to communist leaders, including two deputy prime ministers. And others. Several were "communists," but a different brand than we had feared. I recruited six or seven Eisenhower fellows after we launched our program there in 2013. Several, especially from the south, were free-market businessmen who supported continuing reform of the system. Who would have thought…!

Q: Exactly.

WOLF: So that was Vietnam. I left and I went on --

Q: When did you leave?

WOLF: In the late fall of 1973?

Q: '73, OK, and you went off to Athens.

WOLF: Directly to Athens. Another direct transfer.

Q: Direct transfer.

WOLF: Those were the good years. I learned a lot at those two small posts. I remember Perth got one or several votes as worst first assignment in my JO class.

Q: Really?

WOLF: Because people said, you know, "Why would want that?" -- you know, it's just like going to San Diego.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Well, yes and no. Yes, the weather was just like San Diego -- I mean it was a really nice place. And, its economy was skyrocketing with the mineral boom and stuff like that. But no, Australians were *a lot* different in terms of their approach to life. It was a pretty relaxed place. And they didn't work nearly as hard as people do in San Diego. Where else in the world on Wednesday afternoon do all the young professionals close up at 3:00 pm and go down to the Swan River for sailing races and then a night out? It was a ton of fun and I learned a lot.

Da Nang was another one of those really small posts. My class was the first class where one was not required to go to Vietnam for a first tour. I'm not sure that anybody else in my entering class actually served in Vietnam. I did and I'm glad (after the fact). For reasons that I said. It was an important experience, and I had a great, great mentor. He taught me things that would help me be a more effective officer in the years to come; he was interested in my career development. I was still in the Consular Cone, and I'm glad I had these experiences vs. simply being dumped in a visa mill at some large post. I had a chance to do whatever it is that I could do to help a post achieve its mission. I learned that I had two choices, sit and wait, like I did for my authentications, or go and find something to do. It was a lot more satisfying to go out and find something to do, and it had the ancillary benefit of making me a better officer.

Q: The advantages of a small post with lots of duties.

WOLF: I didn't love Da Nang; I loved Perth, loved the people. But in Da Nang I grew up a lot. And, even had I done nothing but that one adoption I'd have made a mark. There were a few more times in subsequent assignments where we impacted people directly, but this was one of the first.

Q: We'll stop for now. We'll pick it with Athens.

Q: This today is October 21st, 2014. We're resuming the oral history of Ambassador John Wolf. So John, you went then to Athens. And when was that?

WOLF: That was in the fall of 1973.

Q: And you arrived at a very tumultuous time I imagine.

WOLF: It was OK then. It became a little more animated several months later.

Q: Tell me about what was going on when you arrived and what your new duties involved.

WOLF: So I was the staff assistant to Ambassador Henry Tasca, and it was an opportunity for me to get new perspective on Foreign Service life, and life at an

Embassy. One travel anecdote on the way… -- we had been told in Saigon that we would be given a stopover, so I thought well, this is great, I'll treat Mahela to a special treat, and with a little stopover money and a little John Wolf money we'll stay at Claridge's in London. It turned out the travel section had given me wrong information, so it was all on our nickel. But I was fine; we had a wonderful day in London, and thereafter we continued to get Christmas cards from Claridge's addressed to Vice Consul and Mrs. John Wolf. I wanted over time to tell them I got promoted….but eventually the cards stopped.

Henry Tasca was a longtime Foreign Service officer. He was promoted to FSO-1 (then the senior grade) in 1951. He worked for Averell Harriman. He had his own special idiosyncrasies…he used to revel in assigning the same tasks to multiple parts of the embassy. And so different people would have the same tasking. The role of the staff assistant was then to see where the work was and try to help smooth traffic flow. In due course I got to the point where I actually was helping keep all the trains running in the same direction, tho' I'm not sure that fully fit the ambassador's intent of seeing who got back to him first with a solution.

My role as staff assistant evolved; when I arrived the job as defined by my predecessor had mostly been to act as travel officer for the embassy. There were *countless* VIPs (very important person), congressmen, visiting Greek Americans and others. And my predecessor spent time making sure that everybody got a good, good visit to Athens. His office was across the hall from the executive office -- out of sight and out of mind. I thought that was pretty damn boring, with a few exceptions especially visiting Congressional delegations that were fun to shepherd around. The most memorable was Senator William Scott from Virginia who was visiting Athens on his first overseas trip. We came around a bend on the way in from the airport and got our first great view of the Acropolis -- he asked, "what're all those stones up there"…then continued, "most people here, they Muslim?" Other CODELs came a bit better briefed.

Q: Kind of limited.

WOLF: Yes. And so I tried to work my way around the embassy getting to know and to network with the counselors. We had several terrific senior officers there.

When I arrived, Greece was still governed by a military junta -- the "Colonels." The U.S. -- Greek relationship was largely managed through intelligence channels or military channels. And it was never clear to me -- I mean was not privy -- to how much did and didn't come to the ambassador's desk from the intelligence types, or how much say he had in what happened through those channels. The key issues related to Cyprus and relations (poor) with Turkey.

Domestically, the situation turned dramatically worse in the fall1973 after the military used force to suppress student protests. Papadopoulos was overthrown by the head of military intelligence (Brig. General Ioannidis) who the following summer was

instrumental in instigating the overthrow of Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus. That led to a Turkish invasion and bifurcation of Cyprus.

Again, I suspect elements of the Embassy had deep insight into matters those seven months, but we were unable, or unwilling, to steer matters, and the result in summer 1974 was a dangerous face-off between two relatively unstable NATO allies. The Turks were far stronger and better equipped, but passions ran high in Greece after the failed attempt at "enosis" (uniting Cyprus with Greece).

The department dispatched Undersecretary Joseph Sisco to try to mediate between the two sides. And again, maybe I was too junior but, with allies verging on war, it wasn't clear to me why the ambassador was so unhappy that somebody was coming from Washington. Actually, as fraught as the relationship was between Greece and Turkey, it seemed worse between Embassies Athens and Ankara. The two US Ambassadors were at each other's throats, at least verbally.

The Department seemed not enamored with its Ambassador in Athens and vice versa…in fact, when Mr. Sisco arrived, the Ambassador chose not to host him at the Residence, but let him bunk instead in the DCM's office.

Q: Really?

WOLF: And -- don't ask me -- I just was following orders at the time. So I remember we had a little sign that said Joseph J. Sisco, Undersecretary, on Mr. Brandon's door. And Sisco came in, looked around and inquired, from me: "Son, the name on the door is Joe Sisco and if this is my room where's my bottle of scotch?" *(laughs).*

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: In the cadenza.

Anyway, it was a fast-moving few hours. Sisco jumped right in, even as the Greek Government was melting into the night. Sisco had a stand-down plan that he wanted to present to the Greeks, but could not find anyone in authority -- the prime minister was not available, the foreign minister was out of touch, etc. Finally, in the middle of the night U/S Sisco, saw the head of the navy. Beforehand, however, Sisco needed to clear some points with Secretary Kissinger, and asked me to make the phone connection. So I got on the AUTOVON (Automatic Voice Network) via the U.S. airbase, they connected us to the White House, the White House put us through to the western White House at San Clemente. And then came one of the conversations I'll simply never-ever forget because it was so, so much fun. I said to the sergeant or whomever answered at the other end that Mr. Sisco needed to talk to Dr. Kissinger. He replied Dr. Kissinger had just left for Newport Beach where he was staying. I reported this to the under secretary who said insistently:

"I need to *talk* to him NOW" -- which I duly relayed.

And then the guy at the White House Communications Agency told me: "Well, what we can do is we can have the motorcade pull into a gas station and have Dr. Kissinger call in from a payphone," *(laughs).*

And I was by then having a great time, so I turned to Joe Sisco and I said, "Here's what they're going to have him do. They're going to have him pull into a gas station and call you from a pay phone." And just about then -- I don't know whether it was an eraser or a pencil, whatever, went whizzing by my head and he, -- he was volcanic.

But shortly thereafter Kissinger called in. I don't know, maybe from Newport Beach. In any event, it was another one of those experiences -- Sisco was really sharp, really focused. He said, "Henry, this is the situation. This is what I'm going to do. If that doesn't work I'll fall back to this, and if that doesn't work I'll fall back to that."

And I'm sitting here thinking to myself, "Oh my God, what's going on?" All this on an unclassified line.

I actually had a chance subsequently to ask him about that -- and he said, "Not to worry, there is some little guy in the basement of the Ministry of Interior who has now copied down everything that I said. He's going to translate it into Greek and then he's going to go and take it to the navy chief of staff. By then I'll be, I'll be long gone." Whatever, he got an okay in Athens then prepared to fly to Ankara. Interestingly, when the Turks delayed giving him an air clearance, he simply packed up and went to the airport saying they would not dare to shoot down his plane. In the event, he got to Ankara, the two sides stood down, and the immediate crisis ebbed…although the problem of a divided Cyprus and Greek-Turkish tension continues to this day.

It was shortly after that that the Ioannidis government fell and Prime Minister Karamanlis returned from exile The release of pent up emotion was unbelievable; the evening that Karamanlis came back a half million Greeks marched from Syntagma Square, and past our embassy to celebrate (and protest). And then they had a civilian government.

My job morphed considerably as a result of crisis and its aftermath. I was able to move my office, or my desk, from a place across the hall where I was out of sight and out of mind to a location in the front office between the secretaries to the ambassador and the DCM. And I became in essence the executive secretary managing the avalanche of cables that came and went from the embassy. That was interesting.

There was a real job to play -- coordinating among the various sections and making sure that things that needed to get done were getting done. The hours got longer and indeed were 24/7. The way the ambassador wanted it was that whenever traffic came in for him, generally NODIS (No distribution) sensitive cables from the Secretary Kissinger, the message center, or after-hours the marine guards, would alert me to come look at the message and decide whether it needed action or not. A lot of that traffic came at the close of Washington's day (8-10 pm) but 3-5 am Athens time. It got to the point where the

process automatic, I'd get up, I'd go, I'd look, I'd sign off, and return it to the marines for action in the morning. On one occasion, I recall sitting on my bed and asking my wife, "Am I coming or am I going?"

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Anyway, it was fun, though wearing for my wife and me. Ambassador Tasca's tour ended that summer, and the new Ambassador, Jack Kubisch, came in September 1974. The difference in styles was the difference between night and day. Tasca kept a million balls in the air and loved to juggle all of them. Mr. Kubisch was a very methodical person, one thing at a time. And so I had to learn very quickly to prioritize what I presented to the Ambassador, because he didn't want to take time to work through a laundry list. In retrospect, I think there was an implicit learning exercise -- only direct to him the things an Ambassador needed to do; get others to take responsibility for the rest.

Monty Stearns was the DCM, and he had a lot of experience in Greece, and spoke fluent Greek. When he had been there as a young political officer, he'd married the ambassador's daughter, Toni. They kept him on at the embassy but transferred the ambassador. Anyway, Monty saw himself as pol off par excellent, and functioned that way. I needed him to sign some routine admin stuff once, and he leaned back in his chair and asked why I was bothering him…didn't I know he was the house intellectual (speaking jocularly).

There was one other interesting vignette about Ambassador Kubisch. He arrived just a couple days before my father died, and I had to return to Philadelphia for a week almost before I'd had any contact with the Ambassador. The night I returned to post, the Marines called me in for a message from Dr. Kissinger instructing the Ambassador to immediately call the Foreign Minister on some matter. Not knowing the Ambassador's preferences, I hesitated a moment, but then called the Ambassador and I said, "Ambassador, John Wolf, I'm your staff assistant. I'm sorry I've been away, but -- I have a message from the Secretary for your immediate action." There was a slight hesitation then he replied "Why don't you give it to me in the morning? I understand the foreign minister's not going to be back from Rome until midday, midday today." My heart sort of stopped, but the next morning he said, "You did exactly the right thing. Err on the side of alerting me rather than not."

Not only was the work interesting but also we enjoyed the opportunities we had to travel in Greece. Mahela and I learned a little bit of Greek, enough to sort out streets and order in restaurants. Actually she learned some basic phrases for the home, which actually worked with our apartment concierge once when the plumbing failed.

Q: When I visited there in '76 I think it was, there still seemed to be a residual antagonism toward Americans. And I'm not sure how pervasive that was, it was just my impression as a visitor. But you mentioned the -- when these people were marching past

the embassy and U.S. wasn't their most popular embassy. Did that -- what were the attitudes toward the U.S. and --

WOLF: Certainly almost every Greek believed passionately that America had propped up the military junta for the 10 years that they were in power. And with young people in particular that was a sore point. But there was a difference between attitudes toward the U.S., and attitudes toward Americans. I remember we traveled to Delphi for Easter with a Greek-American FSO and his wife. People could not have been more gracious and open. There was no sense of animosity. Remember, so many Greeks have brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, cousins, uncles, whatever in the United States. We had always to keep our guard up, and indeed were trained to look under our car every morning to make short there wasn't a bomb planted there.

Q: Even when you were not with a Greek speaking friend.

WOLF: We never had any problems of that sort.

I was staff assistant for 18 months and after the Cyprus crisis dulled down and ebbed, the front office excitement also ebbed and frankly there wasn't a lot of work for me. About that time, in any event, my assignment was curtailed and we were transferred to Washington, I think stimulated by a letter Ambassador Tasca had written proposing me for an assignment to the Operations Center,

Q: But your job in Athens was mainly internal. You weren't going over to the Foreign Ministry and making demarches and things like --

WOLF: No, I was *entirely* inside and coordination.

Q: It was good background. You went to the Op Center next?

WOLF: Yes

Q: Because that was good background for the Op Center.

Q: So you returned when.

WOLF: Fall, 1974. I spent a year, 1975 in the OpsCenter (S/S-O) which was a fascinating introduction to Washington and the Department. Officers in S/S-O act as: a) the 24-hour frontline for the State Department. Especially after hours, S/S-O answers calls from the field, from other agencies reaching out to Department principals, and from the public. And with the exception of a few tagged, "drop-lines," one didn't know who was calling or what the call was about until one answered. Was it somebody who had a family member in trouble abroad? Was it another Cabinet official reaching out to the Secretary? Or was it somebody who was slightly crazy? One call I took late at night I still remember

graphically. On the other end was my former consul in Da Nang, Fred Brown, who was the DCM in Nicosia. After a bunch of pleasantries, I asked how we could help.

Fred responded: "Well, I'm calling from the vault in the embassy. The embassy is surrounded by a hostile mob and we wanted to alert Washington…" That triggered a set of standard procedures in the OpsCenter, and I stayed on with FZB, who was calm and collected throughout. Ultimately, the siege was relieved without injuries, and he signed off with regards to my wife.

Q: Did the hours drive you crazy? You were on sort of a rotating schedule.

WOLF: You started with two midnights, then two 8:00s, then two four to midnights. It took some getting used to. When we first returned, we didn't have a place to live and rented temporarily across the street. I recall after mid-night shifts I slept in the walk-in closet of our apartment. But it all worked out and I loved that job. The other position was that of "editor." Both S/S-O and the Intelligence Bureau (INR) prepared overnight summaries of key news from cables and the intelligence. I enjoyed both the front "first responder job" as well as that of editor. In the latter, we learned there was a premium on terse, but informative prose -- and gripping headlines.

Q: Get their attention.

WOLF: Yes, attention grabbing and puns were not discouraged. 1975 was a busy year. In April, Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, and two weeks later Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese. I was on duty the evening (Washington time) that Saigon fell and there were a million phone calls coming and going and, keeping information flowing to the principals as it came into the Op Center. I also was there in August when Bangladesh's President Mujibur Rahman was assassinated. I recalled we alerted the Secretary -- he had been asleep -- and he told us "Have Phil Habib," who was I think at the time assistant secretary for East Asian Affairs, do a memo to have ready at opening of business. This is one time we edited the Secretary's instructions.

Instead, we called up Hal Sanders from the Near East and South Asia Bureau that actually had responsibility for Bangladesh. We told him: "Good news and bad news. Bad news is that President Rahman been assassinated. The good news is the Secretary tasked the East Asia Bureau to write the memo on implications (NEA took action).

There were lots of nights like that…world events that required immediate attention. But as I said, many of the calls were people calling for help. This was the only number they had and when they called, if it was urgent, we were the ones to get the government cranked up to help. There are always discussions about whether the State Department has stakeholders. I knew that every day, and every night, when our stakeholders reached out, we helped whenever we could, trying to be as supportive as we could.

Q: And your consular experience was good background for that.

WOLF: Consular experience was good background, sure, but listening, and leaning forward to help are things that should be core for officers whatever their cones.

Another fun part of work in the OpsCenter was to see a good bit of what was happening at the highest levels on issues we'd otherwise have only known from the papers. Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Carlucci in Portugal had an intense, largely unpublicized debate about the future of Portugal. We had opportunity to read the cables and memoranda of conversations that were securely stored in S/S-O overnight for the Executive Secretariat. Theirs was a pretty animated discussion. But in the end you had two people trying to get the right thing done.

Q: Then there were the changes in Africa as a result, in the Portuguese territories in Africa.

WOLF: Yes that flowed in a big way. S/S-O gave me a new view of the world and the Department and I met dozens of people, some with whom I'd work for nearly thirty years.

Q: And learning a lot is relative to junior officer. Now, so when you went to Da Nang to Athens you didn't get any home leave I take it?

WOLF: I didn't get any home leave.

Q: And then when you went to the Operations Center did you get any home leave before that?

WOLF: If I got any it wasn't much -- I maintained a large balance on home leave.

Q: They were sort of abusing you when it came to your leave time, weren't they?

WOLF: I suppose --

Q: Direct transfer to Da Nang, no home leave before you go back to --

WOLF: But, but it was fun and S/S-O actually left time for family (my wife). The staggered hours meant there were 3-4 days a week when I had day time free to do things with her, or occasionally to swat golf balls.

After the Operations Center I then went off to the 26-week course, economics course.

Q: At FSI?

WOLF: At FSI.

Q: How was that? Was that -- they say it's sort of the master's degree level.

WOLF: I think a bit in between -- perhaps more a concentrated bachelor's degree, with some master's level material. For me it was an adventure because first I had to learn more sophisticated math than I had employed as an English and American Civilization major in college. John Harrington was the instructor who taught calculus. And for whatever reason, maybe because I was just a little more mature, it finally clicked and I understood it.

Q: And you requested the assignment, too.

WOLF: I did. And from there, I went to the International Organization Bureau's Office of Agriculture. It wasn't an assignment that was pushing me to Department stardom, but turns out it was one where I had another superb supervisor, Paul Byrne, and I had real responsibility and lots of scope for personal initiative. IO/AGR managed the four UN system food programs (headquartered in Rome) -- the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Program, the World Food Council, which had been set up in 1974, as well the nascent International Fund for Agricultural Development, which just was under negotiation. IFAD was an idea that had come out of the 1974 World Food Conference to match developed country contributions with contributions from OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries). It was to be a specialized agency with unique power sharing, equal voices by developed nations, OPEC, and the developing countries. In the office, I was responsible for the World Food Program and for the IFAD specialized agency negotiations. I was part of a multi-agency negotiating team led by AID, with Treasury and State, both IO and EB. And we had a team leader from AID who led well, and loved to eat. Since we were in Rome frequently over two years, that made for a really fun tour.

Q: So you got to travel, huh?

WOLF: There was a lot…I was in Rome probably a week a month for two years. For WFP, AID took care of the programming of the food, USDA dealt with the supply of food, and I dealt with the organization's management issues, and whatever politics came its way. In the mid-1970's that was mainly the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and a couple other liberation organizations. For me, that was a challenge since I was still fairly junior, and all the other delegations, developing and developed country, were led at the ambassadorial level.

Q: But promotions were coming along?

WOLF: I suppose, but I wasn't on the rocket track. More important than my rank, I suppose, was that when I sat behind the sign that said "United States of America" others listened -- and I wanted to be sure to make our case persuasively. It didn't matter whether the person next to me was the ambassador of the United Kingdom or France or Guinea or whomever. At that point, I was representing the United States. I must have done it OK because they actually made me the chairman of the drafting group at one point leading the writing of the report of one of the meetings. There could have been two reasons for my selection…one, because I was contributing, or two, it was a good way to keep me

quiet.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: But in any event, I felt really proud. I'd sit there with ambassadors all around the table and FSO-5, John Wolf.

While it did (and still does) tremendously important work for the impoverished all over the world, especially in strife-torn countries, WFP embodied some of the real ironies of the UN system. We'd spend the whole morning talking about hunger and famine and helping destitute, poor people. And then about 1:00, as is done in Rome, we'd break for lunch. And a number of the developing country ambassadors and others would get in their chauffeur-driven cars and go to the restaurants around Rome -- and the US delegation would take the subway somewhere to eat, not infrequently in the same piazzas. We just showed up just a little bit later. And then we'd go back to WFP…

Q: Talk about hunger.

WOLF: -- yes, often until eight or 9:00. My wife could not be persuaded that this was not a giant boondoggle. Anyway, I took her along with me on a trip. And I still have this distinct image of an evening we were to go out, but I didn't get back to the hotel until about 10:30 at night and there was my wife, fully dressed for a night out in Rome, sitting on the bed tapping her boot. We did go out, she was a very good sport, then and always. And I think she concluded we actually were working on all these trips.

Q: Now, with all these agencies and it sounds like fairly strong support for them, was this largely because there were American food products involved? Was there good funding from the Congress? How did that work?

WOLF: World Food Program had strong support because it was a way to use PL-480 food commodities. We didn't provide a lot of cash; we provided a lot of food. I suppose WFP and many of the recipients would have preferred that we provide cash, and/or buy commodities locally, but the Congressional support translated into support for American farmers.

The interagency process for WFP worked quite well as far as I can remember. So too did our IFAD team. Actually I continued working with a couple of them for the next twenty-five years off and on. Looking back, in the '70s, the words "interagency process" were not words one would say with a sneer. It actually worked. There was relatively little duplication, and only modest overlap…a lot like in Congress where the committee system worked, legislation got marked up, the two bodies voted, held conferences, then enacted legislation.

So that was IO Agriculture. I really enjoyed that because as a young officer I had freedom to work on a set of issues that, while small on State's crisis radars, had a real impact on people who were receiving food and wouldn't have had food otherwise. I

remember I got a call one evening. We were making a pledge for the forthcoming WFP biennium, and we needed Under Secretary (E) Cooper's approval. It was a big number, 300 million, 400 million dollars (mostly commodities). Whatever. And I got a call at 7:00 or 7:30 at night. The undersecretary placed the call himself and when I answered he asked "How is it that there is a program to which we're giving 200 million dollars a year, 400 million dollars for the biennium, that I've never heard of?"

And I think I stammered out something like, "Uhhh I thought maybe -- I thought EB was supposed to keep you apprised of this." That was a bad reply probably. But in any event, the point is it was an under the radar program doing valuable work. Three-four decades later its role still is vital -- and its name is much better known I know for policymakers.

Q: How long were you in that job?

WOLF: I think that was my first full tour -- two years.

Q: And you had bid on it? You had asked for it? Or were you recruited?

WOLF: I don't actually remember. I probably bid on it. I mean I think it was one of the ones I bid on out of the 26-week course. Then I went to Princeton.

Q: So this is, so you went to Princeton, what year is this now?

WOLF: We were up to about '78.

Q: '78, off to Princeton. Here again, you asked for, or you were tapped --

WOLF: I applied for mid-career, university training.

Q: Oh, OK.

WOLF: Because if you're going to do economics, and I wanted to change cones, I needed more economics. At Princeton, I studied mostly international finance. It was quite liberating after eight or nine years in the Foreign Service, a chance to recalibrate. One thinks differently in an academic setting vs. in a bureaucracy. Actually, I needed to think sharper, and rely more on facts and equations. I learned to think in terms of "models." I had several professors who were tops in the world. One, Peter Kenen, taught international finance. And he ran his seminar of 10 at the Woodrow Wilson School like a board meeting of the IMF (International Monetary Fund), you know, the executive directors of the IMF. That turned out to be good preparation for my next tour. Professor William Branson's books on exchange rates was the text most used around the country. A first rate teacher, and a marvelous guy to know. I did take an econometrics course from another world-famous economist -- he'd scrawl his equations on blackboards that encircled the class -- and it made me dizzy. I took that one pass-fail, I suppose, and there wasn't a big market for that discipline when I got back to the Department.

Q: Was this a course specifically for Foreign Service --

WOLF: No, as a mid-career Fellow I was free to take courses anywhere at Princeton -- mostly at the Woodrow Wilson School, but a few in the graduate economics department. FSI wanted me to take mostly courses in economics of course. But, the definition of what was economics was fairly broad. One of the courses I enjoyed most was on energy, and I wrote a long research paper on the gas pipeline from Canada to the United States. It was really interesting because a lot of the things that were issues in the late 1970s for that gas pipeline in terms of environmental issues and whatnot, are issues we're still debating today.

Q: Was this a degree program?

WOLF: At the time, it was a non-degree program. I received some kind of certificate. In fact, I had wanted to go to Yale's new two-year management program. The State Department nixed that. They thought that people who went off for two years were likely not to come back. They countered with Chicago. I knew I didn't have the mathematics horsepower for that. Princeton was a very impressive compromise.

Q: Sounded like a great choice.

WOLF: It was, it was good. From there, from Princeton, I went to the EB Office of Monetary Affairs.

Q: This is what year?

WOLF: 1979 I guess.

Q: '79, Office of Monetary Affairs. And here again, did you have a chance to choose your assignment?

WOLF: I chose it. At that point, it was a logical follow-on program to the one that I'd taken at Princeton. It was a busy time. Michael Ely was the office director, and he ran the place like a college seminar. In 1979, the world was experiencing significant financial disequilibrium following the run-up in oil prices, the so-called recycling issue. Everyone was thinking how to recycle those huge sums in ways that would stabilize the world economy. The IMF was a key player and, while Treasury had an absolute lead there, State (OMA) had a place at their table.

Q: What was Ely's purpose? Was he using this as kind of a think tank where we could help in the decisions of --

WOLF: I suppose, but how the world responded had real world impact on countries in economic distress. We really were wrestling with some new financial realities, and thinking how to tailor US policy to work in that setting. We had a good staff, Ely, Bill Milam, the deputy, Laurie Peters (with whom I had worked when she was in Saigon), and

a couple others

I spent a lot of time on Jamaica, which was suffering mightily after Michael Manley's socialist polemics had nearly sunk the Jamaican economy. At the IMF, Omar Albertelli was the guy responsible for Jamaica. I spent an awful lot of time in Mr. Albertelli's office talking about how we could help this country. In the end, with some cajoling from the U.S., the Fund put in place a financing program that provided needed capital in returns for substantial economic reforms. The program, I recall, was a stretch, and incorporated a variety of heroic assumptions about prices of e.g., sugar, bauxite, bananas and tourism, since that was the only way the model could be in equilibrium. We supported it though since Jamaica's government under newly elected PM Seaga was high priority for the White House.

Q: Sounds like your Princeton experience was very good preparation for the job.

WOLF: Yes. We had a lot of business, a variety of countries that needed IMF and World Bank support to get through their financial crises. The one that had the most impact for me going forward was Pakistan, in the winter of 1980 and early 1981 as the Reagan Administration took office.

I remember the Pakistan desk officer came by to clear a memo about the assistance package the Reagan Administration would use to reopen a relationship that had been frozen several years previous due to the Bhutto government's pursuit of a nuclear weapon. However, by 1981, Pakistan was facing intense pressures following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The aim was to provide security and economic assistance in return for collaboration on Afghanistan and restraint on Pakistan's nuclear ambitions. I remember looking at the options memo -- actually, I didn't have the memo. I had a paragraph and I said to the desk officer, "You know, in EB we don't clear paragraphs; we only clear memos." When I saw the whole memo, it was clear that NEA was proposing a package that would knock Pakistan out of compliance with its IMF program that we hoped would help Pakistan stabilize its economy. When EB and NEA couldn't work this out at the office and DAS level, we took the fight to Undersecretary James Buckley, who, as U/S for Security Assistance, Science and Technology, and had the policy lead at State. Buckley came down on EB's side, saying in essence: "we can't have this package if it's going to have that result." In a career, there are certain times and places where the road -- two roads diverge? And Buckley's decision was one of those times for me.

Q: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

WOLF: Not only did he side with EB, but he also asked me to accompany him to Islamabad to advise on the economic package. On the way back, NEA's principal DAS, Peter Constable (spouse of my boss Elinor Constable, a DAS in EB), advocated that Buckley hire me on his staff. That was a pivotal moment, and led to several future assignments that changed my path in the Foreign Service.

Buckley was putting together an office and wanted someone to create and manage an

integrated foreign assistance budget process My EB assignment was curtailed and I went to T in the summer of 1981. Buckley had engaged another person from outside the Department to work on the budget with me, but I remember in August that person (and Buckley) took off for vacation. My charge was to have the framework of an integrated foreign assistance budget when Mr. Buckley got back. Peter McPherson, the AID Administrator, had sneered at the idea of an integrated foreign assistance budget, lest it undercut AID authority over the development accounts. But he had to maneuver carefully because the budget idea had Secretary Haig's full support. McPherson had confided to his staff that he expected our budget process to fail -- Wolf had no budgeting experience -- and he told his staff just to play along until we failed.

I remember sitting one August evening looking out my window -- T has the Department's best view out over the Pentagon, the Potomac and all the way to Anacostia. It was sunset, the river was red, the lights were twinkling and I was sitting there thinking "what in God's earth am I doing here…what's an integrated foreign assistance budget…and how are we going to move ahead?"

What I did was simply to start with my counterpart in AID-PPC, who was my counterpart in AID. Working together, the two of us crafted an analytic process, a framework for reaching decisions, and sent out taskers to the bureaus. It worked and by September the Secretary had an integrated budget to send to the White House. I still recall attending the first White House Budget Review (BRB) (OMB Director Stockman, Chief of Staff James Baker, and WH Counselor Ed Meese on one side; Secretary Haig on the other). That first BRB review Stockman opened by hammering Haig for requesting a big increase. Haig, who wasn't a tall man, leaned across the table in the Roosevelt Room and got right in Stockman's face telling him: "You're talking about a bunch of numbers; I'm talking about the President's national security strategy." Haig won that first round, and our budget process was established -- although in future years we were far more penurious with resources.

The hardest negotiator at State was always Princeton Lyman who was principal DAS in the Africa Bureau. When I'd go see him with our proposed allocations, he invite in all his office directors, then savage the numbers -- and me. He'd regularly tell me this was the dumbest thing in the world; you *can't* do this and you *can't* do that and if you do this it'll have this implication. Then he tossed me out. But about 7:30 that night he called me up and I'd either meet him in his office or mine -- with no spectators. And we'd craft a deal. The key in the integrated budget was the idea that one could, in many cases, substitute one form of assistance for another, e.g., trading among ESF, food aid, and development assistance, and even sometimes military assistance. Princeton was a pro, and knew how to optimize outcomes. Sometimes one had to take from country A to give to B, and we did that. And, in that process, one of the key things I had to remember, it was probably Princeton who told me.. "It's easy for you to move numbers around on a paper…but never forget that under each one of those numbers there's a program, there are people, and there's an impact."

That was important policy lesson for me because, you know, it was real easy to sit up on

the seventh floor of the State Department in this office with a terrific view and the convening power that came with the job. We had incorporated better and better technology including the first versions of the spreadsheet program, Lotus 1, 2, 3, which we used on an early version IBM desktop. We'd change a number and could watch the changes ripple through the spreadsheet (these were NOT fast computers). So, it was important for me to remember that every time we changed a number somebody somewhere was impacted, positively or negatively.

I had to manage the process to optimize the foreign policy impact of assistance, I had a drawer filled with Presidential decisions, "NSDDs" or whatever they were at the time, telling us give to allocate money here and there. People would come up waving their NSDDs and I'd just pull out another 20 or so saying the budget process requires us to make choices. For me, that was a first real chance to operate on issues that were important doing something that was really interesting with, you know, the best of the Foreign Service. And I really enjoyed it. It was another assignment where I worked for great bosses (tho' James Buckley and Bill Schneider could not have been more different personalities). They had very different strengths -- Buckley was strong within the administration and worked authorizers in Congress; Schneider, who had worked appropriations for Rep. Jack Kemp, prowled the back-corridors of the appropriations/foreign ops subcommittee. I learned a lot, but the hours were really/really long, and there was not a lot of free time, including for family.

Q: I'm sure.

WOLF: I had a daughter who was then about three or four and my son who was like zero or one.

Q: You were living where at this point?

WOLF: We were living out in Westmoreland Hills (Bethesda). It wasn't that far to the Department; but I rarely drove in traffic given the long hours.

Q: You were there for three years?

WOLF: '81 to '84. Yes. I tried to bail out in 1983. Mike Armacost was then the Ambassador to the Philippines and the idea arose of my going as his Pol-Mil Counselor. The Foreign Service turned that down cold, too junior, not going to happen. Lesson for posterity; sometimes when one door closes, another one opens. So I didn't get that job to be pol-mil counselor (where I had hoped to be involved with the ongoing base renewal negotiations), but in 1984, Ambassador Hinton recruited me to be political counselor in, in Islamabad. While I had reconed from consular to economic, HR still approved this assignment.

Q: Was that a difficult process, reconing?

WOLF: Not really. I think it happened when I was in EB. I'd done the 26 week course,

and advanced economic training. I had done the OMA (Office of Monetary Affairs) job.

Q: This is in '84.

WOLF: '84, Deane Hinton was a special person, and I will always think of him as one of my mentors (along with Arnie Raphel).

Q: Where were you in terms of grade at this point, had you gotten --

WOLF: I was an FSO-1 in the new system.

Q: Well, so you went -- you --

WOLF: At some point my promotion rate went up.

Q: Yeah, sounds like it. Because an 01, that'd be a three in the old system.

WOLF: Right. I think after I got to OMA I got a quick promo -- then one or two more rather quickly.

Q: Deane is still around of course, and he's doing a book with us.

WOLF: Is he?

Q: Yeah, he's doing an autobiography.

WOLF: He's in Costa Rica?

Q: Yes.

WOLF: We exchange letters every Christmas. Anyway, in 1984 he sought me out as political counselor; he liked to recruit his own people. I was an FSO-1.

Q: And there weren't any pol types who were saying, "Hey, wait a minute, he's an econ officer. I should go?"

WOLF: Well --

Q: Of course the ambassador was asking for you.

WOLF: The ambassador wanted me and I think I got support from U/S Schneider and others on the seventh floor.

Q: So, no question.

WOLF: None that I recall, and by then I did have some experience with Pakistan, having stayed close to issues following my travel to Islamabad in 1981.

Q: But you're a young 01 at this point.

WOLF: Yes, I suppose.

Q: Fourteen years? That's pretty good.

WOLF: So 1984, I was 38. So --

Q: Of course Tom Pickering was --

WOLF: He was a career ambassador at 38 *(laughs).*

Q: OK, so off to --

WOLF: We had a great section. Jim Moriarty was my domestic affairs officer. Steve Kappes, who later would be the deputy at CIA, also was in my section. We had two amazing local employees. Our FSNs were extremely well plugged in. One had been a professor at Gordon College, Imtiaz ul Haq. He had taught the political elite of the Punjab and he knew everyone. And, he could get me an appointment with anybody. If I wanted to go see a minister, he would go sit in the private secretary's office until the minister came out. And then he'd say, "Wolf-sahib would like to come see you." More often than not, the minister would say sure, have him come down. In fact Ambassador Hinton once asked me why it was so easy for me to see ministers while he had to write a diplomatic note via the Foreign Ministry every time he wanted to see someone.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF I said, "Well, I've got Imtiaz and, and that's my job."

The other thing that we did with Imtiaz and his colleague was to stake them to tea money in the National Assembly cafeteria. They'd go about every day, and their table was kind of neutral ground where politicians from all sides would gather to gossip. Two or three times a week too, I'd have Imtiaz take a handful of blank invitation cards for lunches at my house (which was across the street), and they'd round up interesting groups that I'd then host. Great way to meet people. I spent a lot of time with a variety of jr. ministers, parliamentary secretaries and a variety of Majlis members. The ambassador asked me, why I was spending all this time with a second-class politicians. I suppose he meant that Pakistan was run by President Zia; the foreign policy was run by Yaqub Khan; and the economy was run by, the minister of finance. But I replied that this was in fact my job, as political counselor, and over my years there, and for a couple decades thereafter, the people whom I used to host were Pakistan's leading politicians/ministers, and even one provincial, chief minister. Pakistan was going through a political metamorphosis mutating from a military led government to quasi-civilian rule. They had started with

local elections, then elections to a new National Assembly, and it was still to be seen whether this could be done peacefully, and whether Pakistan would stay stable -- in the end, the process hasn't been entirely peaceful nor stable, even today.

I spent a lot of time talking to the parliamentarians about how democracies work. And I remember I could say then that in our system we have Republicans and Democrats, they have very different views, but the nature of the system is that eventually they have to find a middle ground, not necessarily what one side or the other wanted, but still a path forward. It would be a lot harder to make that case today. But it was true in the '80s and they were all intensely interested.

The U.S. Pakistan relationship then, as now, was a difficult one. Pakistanis appreciated that we were helping them up in particular in regard to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. By then, the Mujahadeen were becoming increasingly potent as a fighting force, even as Afghan refugees were increasingly visible all across northern Pakistan. Many Pakistanis saw the U.S. as a special country, and many had relatives in the U.S., and some had been to school there. However, at the official level, there was a kind of "love-hate" relationship…including anxiety about U.S. ties with India and about our opposition to Pakistan's nuclear program, which they viewed as much more vigorous than our opposition to India's nuclear weapons program.

I traveled widely, to every part of Pakistan except the northern Sind province. And, wherever I went, I was treated with amazing hospitality, and genuine curiosity about America. Certainly, the reception was in part their code of hospitality, but I think it went beyond that.

Pakistan was a frustrating place, still feudal in most senses in the countryside. Corruption was increasing, as were sectarian tensions. Education and many aspects of public services were failing at an increasing rate. But the scourge of ethnic and sectarian strife present in 2014 wasn't so evident in the eighties; I could still see most anyone, including the head of the Jamaat-e-Islami, which I suspect wouldn't be possible today.

When I arrived in Pakistan in 1984 the embassy was just reopening in the chancery, which was burned out by rioters in 1979. A lot had changed but, in retrospect, much of the change was on the surface, and there were troubling currents below the surface. The issues for the political section were key security interests for the U.S., including Afghanistan, Pakistan's nuclear program, Pakistan's political evolution and Pakistan/India relations. Leading the fray for us was Ambassador Hinton, who was among the most capable ambassadors of his generation -- of course he spanned generations. And he was colorful; Hinton stories had the quality of legends, and no one ever doubted where he stood on matters -- he was very forthright -- some would say blunt.

He had a unique working style. He'd come in in the morning have the usual meetings etc., then at 1:00pm or 1:30, he'd go back to the residence which also was on the embassy compound…And he wouldn't come back. He frequently had guests for tea though we

rarely knew who those guests were. So he was doing his own political work. But it was always great because, you know, I would go to him hot with an idea, "Sir, I have figured this out!" And he'd listen patiently and then it would strike me "Oh-my-gosh, he already knows this stuff."

Hinton pushed us to work hard. He gave us enormous latitude to do our jobs and he expected us to do them well. He held us accountable when they weren't. He had quite a temper and his political counselor saw that temper more than once. He used to write notes on the top of almost every message and his handwriting was not very good. (He had a nervous condition that affected his writing). His secretary, Pat Brania, and I were about the only people who could decipher those notes -- I suppose since I got so many. Anyway, I used to put the notes in three piles -- the first being "pants on fire, got to get this done today." The second was for things that had merit but were lower priority -- this week's work. The third pile was… "the guy is crazy, I have too many things to do." Every once in a while something would move from pile two to pile one, usually if he asked the same thing again. But he rarely pinged me on pile three.

Deane didn't mind an argument, but at the end he expected us to salute and move on. Every once and awhile, I tested that rule. Once, I went to see him dead set against something that he wanted to put in "my" cable. After a bit of back and forth, Patty closed the door, and the volume kept going up. Eventually *bam*, his hand crashed down on the table, saying, "Wolf, now I'm mad," whatever. I had enough sense to back off. Sometimes he'd vent on something or other, then realize he'd overreacted. And invariably, then, he'd come to my office, or raise it in the car, to make amends. To those outside the embassy, generally in Washington, the Ambassador was a fierce protector of his staff. For most of those inside, we'd walk across hot coals for him.

There was time too for fun, Islamabad style. The ambassador loved to play tennis and played often in the late afternoon. In fact, not infrequently when I had cables for him to approve, I'd go down to the residence and he sign (or amend our messages), but only after a couple sets of tennis…then I'd go back to the chancery for a bit of early evening work. A number of visitors played tennis, and that's where I got to know Mike Armacost even better.

Q: But was it a well-run embassy aside for --

WOLF: Absolutely Oh gosh, it, was run like -- everybody had a responsibility, everybody had a task, everybody knew the priorities. He expected people to work together. I remember once we were in a country team meeting and two AID people came in late. It was a kind of "fasten your seatbelts moment" and we sat there awaiting the explosion. Eventually, he had a question of AID, and asked whether they coordinated whatever with USIS"

"No sir, this is an AID program."

Then it came; Vesuvius blowing. It was Deane Hinton's embassy and he ran it as an

integrated mission. It came to me only years later how adept DRH was as a leader, particularly setting high standards, rewarding performance, and standing up for his people whenever the situation warranted. I tried to do the same when I became a COM, and Assistant Secretary for Non-proliferation…but that's getting ahead of the story.

Q: Who was the DCM?

WOLF: John McCarthy.

Q: Mm-hmm. And the -- this went on for how long?

WOLF: Three years.

WOLF: Well, Deane left in early 1987, a few months before I was scheduled to go back to Washington in early July. Arnie Raphel came in late June. He wanted me to stay until after the Fourth of July. So most of my time was with Deane Hinton. One last story. Once he was instructed to see President Zia to get Pakistan to back down its nuclear enrichment program. The meeting was just the President, Ambassador, the Foreign Secretary and me (as note takers). The ambassador was saying something like, "Mr. President…your enrichment is over the 8 percent redline we've discussed…you need to move back."

Zia sat patiently quietly twisting his mustache like the villain (Snidely Whiplash) in the old Bullwinkle cartoons. At the end, still twisting his mustache, "Ambassador, there are some times when you just have to trust your friends, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh." I got it all. then went back to dictate the reporting cable. But the DCM had just remonstrated POL for too colorful writing (I think he termed it "dilettantism"), so I left out the mustache references. But when I was with the ambassador a couple days later and mentioned the vignette he told me, next time put it in… " That's the sort of stuff that Washington *loves*." Actually the master of reporting messages, replete with local color to give the context, was Ambassador Vernon Walters…his messages from a generation of meetings with foreign heads of state, including a variety of villains, are the best I ever read.

Q: Was there any sort of reporting or analysis duals between Embassy Islamabad, Embassy New Delhi? Any other local embassies? Sometimes they go back and forth.

WOLF: Yes --Harry Barnes in Delhi and Deane Hinton were two lions of the Foreign Service. But the analyses from Delhi and Islamabad often saw the same facts as…

Q: Night and day?

WOLF: Maybe not night and day, but there was always lightning and thunder whenever the ambassadors were involved. Speaking thirty years later, I think I say, objectively, that Embassy New Delhi saw our efforts to build ties in Pakistan as a zero sum game -- and for them India was the prize. They (the embassy) particularly railed against the security assistance relationship the U.S. had with Pakistan. Their messages sounded a lot like Ministry of External Affairs press releases. There were situations however where our

analyses dovetailed, including on a couple of episodes where Pakistan was the provocateur along the disputed border in Kashmir.

Q: How heavily did the Afghanistan situation weigh on what you were doing?

WOLF: Huge. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the impetus for the Reagan Administration's initiative to revamp U.S./Pak relations. We were actively engaged supporting the Afghan resistance, with Pakistan as the intermediary. There were millions of refugees all over the northwest frontier province, and we had a huge aid program aimed there and at the domestic economy. If you saw the movie "Charlie Wilson's War" --

Q: Yes.

WOLF: -- there's a lot of truth to that whole story of the way in which we fairly rapidly increased our support for the Mujahedin.

Q: Did you ever deal with Wilson?

WOLF: Yes, and he was every bit as colorful and every bit as supportive to the mujaheddin cause as the movie portrayed. In the end, the war successfully forced the Soviets to withdraw, but at a severe price to Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, it was balkanized, tribal nature reasserted itself, but the new chieftains were much more strictly Islamic, and much more heavily armed, including with sophisticated weapons we had supplied. And the war led to much more violent, sectarian divisions also in Pakistan, and I suppose a step-up in the military's omnipresence. We supported Afghanistan's resistance with good intentions, but there were few Americans, myself included, who foresaw the second and third order consequences of our action. I don't know that it would have made any difference, because we thought we were doing the right thing at the time. But, it came back to haunt us 10 years later.

Q: Yes.

WOLF: This was another one of those places where the little personal things happened that gave great satisfaction. Mahela was again teaching English including to the wife of the former vice rector of Kabul University. The family had escaped from Kabul with two suitcases. At some point in time, they lost the chit that signified their registration in the queue for political asylum in the United States. We helped them to get it back; this time, again, it was one of the Peter's, this time Laurie's husband, Lee, the refugee counselor, who helped out. The FS world is small.

Anyway, five years later, we were sitting at home in Bethesda when we heard a tap on the door, and there the Afghan family was standing at the front door, but just passing by on the way to California, to say thank you. I think they gave us a small Afghan carpet as thanks (below the ethics limit)…and we still have it.

Q: Yeah, absolutely.

WOLF: Another, terrific assignment. Great people to work with, issues that were important although on several we made only limited progress if any. We succeeded on Afghanistan. India and Pakistan didn't go to war. But, Pakistan never stopped pursuing a nuclear weapon, and the move toward democracy remained hobbled by many factors including critically weak institutions and little regard for the rule of law. But Pakistan would remain an important issue for me in a variety of assignments over the next fifteen years, including especially when I headed the Nonproliferation Bureau in 2001.

Q: So you had terrific background for those sorts of assignments.

WOLF: And it started with that one little paragraph that I refused to clear in 1981. That proved an inflection that changed everything career-wise for me. Paraphrasing Frost, "two roads diverged, and the one I took made all the difference (for my family and me)."

Q: Never know.

WOLF: You never know. I think I mentioned before we started these conversations that I was telling a group of junior officers that, at some point, you know want to be on the other side of a wide abyss, and one simply needs to imagine a rope and jump. Deane Hinton was a terrific leader in that respect -- and then Arnie Raphel, encouraging us to stretch ourselves professionally. Both Deane and Arnie surrounded themselves with people whom they encouraged to take professional risks, to speak their minds and take responsibility.

Q: Make the leap.

WOLF: So that was Pakistan.

Q: So you left Pakistan in --

WOLF: As my tour was coming to an end in 1987 I remember I got a call from Ambassador Paul Boeker and his DCM Pat Theros, soliciting me to be DCM in Amman, Jordan. Mahela and I were pretty excited…"Well, sounds great…the Middle East!"

But, I'd barely hung up the phone when Arnie Raphel was on the phone. He was still the Principal DAS (PDAS) in NEA and he said in no uncertain terms: "Amman is out, John, don't even think about it. I bought you, I paid for you, and you're mine."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: So I went back to be the director of the regional affairs office in NEA, an office that directly supported the NEA PDAS.

Q: So that was in 1987.

WOLF: That was in 1987. Arnie by then was in Islamabad -- and I have one last story about him -- and Ed Djerejian was the new PDAS. Arnie Raphel was iconic also -- a Foreign Service classic. I remember seeing Arnie in a mid-career training film. And there he was -- tie down, shirt sleeves rolled up, talking about being effective in the State Department. Looking into the camera, he said: "If you want to wear those shirts with the little clips under your tie, go to EUR (European Bureau). But if you want to roll up your sleeves and do real work, come to NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs)."

Anyway, he came (back) to Pakistan where he had been a junior political officer in the '70s. My FSN's, when we'd drive in the countryside, often use to talk about the Foreign Service officers who'd come before. It was interesting, like a flashback to "honored roll" in "Gunga Din." There were a couple exceptions, officers whom Imtiaz and Amman regularly excluded -- "stricken from the rolls." Arnie, however, was top of the register, their favorite of favorites.

I recall Arnie's first day at work -- it was Friday, which in Pakistan was part of the weekend, and the new Ambassador came in to see the place. I was coming down from the Political Section, leaving the embassy and I heard the marines say, "Sir, can I help you?"

Arnie replied, "Well, I think I work here."

I flew down the circular staircase to see Arnie, sporting a three day old beard, wearing a tee shirt, and looking quite unsavory, at least to our buttoned down marine. Anyway I introduced him to the new ambassador (and later told the gunny his detachment needed to check out the Ambassador's photo before their next duty shift). Arnie's first cable out was one he sent was to his friend, Rich Armitage, something like, "It's great to be king!"

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Arnie was one of those people who were equally capable of working effectively in Washington and overseas. He had an astonishing network of friends and collaborators all over the State Department and all over Washington. He worked very hard to place people into assignments where they would be involved on issues on which he was or might be working. I remember -- and we'll come to talk about it later -- but I remember at his funeral a couple years later, at Arlington Cemetery after the plane crashed in Pakistan, I was standing with a group on a hillside and, I forget who it was, but it could have been Barbara Bodine, who said "Here we are, Arnie's orphans." We were a half a dozen or 10 people who had worked closely with Arnie Raphel. Arnie had impacted every one of our lives. Deane Hinton was the same. I saw Ambassador Hinton once, when he was coming back, to interview and "select" Panama country officer. He knew how critically important to his Embassy's efforts that person would be, and he was determined to have someone with whom he had a mind-meld.

Q: Interesting. I wonder what the office director felt about that when it came to choosing.

WOLF: You know, I have a feeling that with Ambassador Hinton he said, "Sir, have at it."

Q: (laughs) OK.

WOLF: Back to the story. I returned to NEA/RA.

Q: OK.

WOLF: Another super job, big issues, and great people with whom and for whom I worked. Dick Murphy was the A/S; Ed Djerejian was the PDAS.

Q: Why don't we end it there?

WOLF: You asked last week the question of how important it is whom you know. Two parts to that answer. When you are junior, it's so important what you can learn and draw "inspiration" from your seniors. Some of those jobs are many parts routine, and only a few parts excitement, and good seniors can make all the difference in helping an inexperienced officer get a head of steam and up to speed. Assignments in the beginning are a bit random. The more senior you get, the more important that informal network becomes.

At the start, I went off to Perth, Australia because the central personnel sent me there, notwithstanding the views of the principal officer and the DCM in Australia who wanted a more qualified, more senior person. The central personnel system sent me to Vietnam and they sent me to Greece, though for Greece the assignment came after I had personally lobbied the DG to curtail me in Da Nang and send me somewhere where I could be more useful. For most subsequent assignments, I had some direct input…certainly starting with getting the Ambassador's backing to go to the Operations Center and from there my bosses' support to go to the econ course. I picked EB/OMA from the options we had after Princeton, and the story of going to T I've already covered -- that was direct intervention by U/S Buckley. For Pakistan, Ambassador Hinton sought me out. And beyond that, all the assignments were based on relationships. They matter, but only if people see you can do the job and do it well (not only getting things done but continually stretching the boundaries, as I'd say not just problem solving but looking for opportunities that enable one to do more things to accomplish the mission). Again, Arnie Raphel was the template. He was masterful in Washington and the field. He always had a variety of routes to get things done, he used them effectively, and he got things done.

Q: Yes, indeed. How important is corridor reputation?

WOLF: As you move up in the, in the Foreign Service, your corridor reputation matters; that's a blessing for individuals but a problem for a centrally driven system. Most people who go overseas and stay overseas will tend to have their corridor reputation in a bureau and maybe with the one or two bureaus which cover that post's issues. One may be well known in EB or AID if you're overseas doing econ work. But there will be little

penetration to the wider department. I was fortunate in that respect. I met the DG in Da Nang, and he was helpful; my DCM in Saigon went on to become head of Personnel -- and that helped indirectly. In Athens working with the Ambassadors, and visiting firemen like U/S Sisco, smoothed my path to the Operations Center. And Pakistan was so front and center that I met almost every Department principal, and people all over Washington read the cables I drafted on the Ambassador's behalf.

Service in Washington has some similar properties -- one can stay buried in a bureau, or take assignments outside one's own mainstream that broaden one's credentials and networks. Certainly for me, my jobs in T and P, and my work in IO, helped enormously to shape my path over the years from 1989-2004;

Q: Sometimes even though a person is handpicked it may end up being, being a bad fit. And I know --

WOLF: Some of the worst, some of the worst fits are when there's not enough vetting of the assignments. Exactly. You jam a square peg into a round hole, but it takes a hammer and often breaks the hole.

Q: How important over the long term is service discipline, and worldwide availability?

WOLF: The contract says worldwide availability, and that's essential. During my junior years, for me it was Vietnam -- I didn't know others had turned down the Da Nang job, but I didn't think it an option (or prudent). I went out of the mainstream to IO/AGR, and am glad I did -- it was fun and I learned so much.

When I was COM in Malaysia. I felt a bit like Rex Harrison in "My Fair Lady," why can't they be like we were? I had a sense that young officers were coming to Malaysia with a different approach to careerism than people with whom I joined twenty plus years earlier. We saw the Foreign Service as a career, and our profession. In KL, I saw a number of JO's and mid-career officers seeming just to put in the time, and seeming to have the attitude "well, if this doesn't work, if I'm not happy, then I'll move on and do something else." They tended to separate their workday and their family time, which meant all time after 5:00 pm. The idea of doing representational work, going out after work, the idea of going out and making speeches even, just getting outside the embassy and one's in-basket, was a bit alien to this group. Responding to this, my DCM, Wendy Chamberlin, devised a requirement for every junior and middle grade officer to make a speech once a quarter, somewhere. As a mission, it helped extend the embassy's reach.

I remember asking a young econ officer about his representation plan. (And in Malaysia I operated the representation fund with me at the bottom, that is everybody else could draw from it and what was left over I took, basically to help defray the cost of Fourth of July). I had reckoned that I was pretty well compensated, with a house, a car, and staff -- and my house in Washington was rented at a profit. So, the income swing for me was already substantial even without representation. I wanted to be sure that others at post without those advantages still were able to do representation work and be compensated. But I

asked a young officer, economic officer, one day, "What's your representation plan in your section?"

He said, "Oh. I have to do one luncheon a quarter."

With my fairly primitive math, I quickly multiplied, then asked him "Well, what do you do the other 64 days?"

And he looked startled, like a deer in the headlights -- was I asking him to do more? I was stunned.

So career discipline is important, going where assigned, adhering to mission priorities etc., But that's just a starting point. One should assume that from officers -- and those who can't or won't should leave. But the service needs also to allow room under the rubric "discipline" for officers to press the envelope, search for or create opportunities and work them…and that can be a challenge both to the officer and to his/her supervisors. We need to want people not only to be able to find the important things in an in-basket, and get them done, but also people who live beyond the in basket, where great officers like Arnie Raphel created so much value. When one is a junior or mid-grade officer, if one wants to vie for greater responsibilities, it's not just a question of doing the job. You need to push the boundaries, expand the frontiers. If you're in the Consular Section you're meeting more people than almost anybody else in the embassy. Keep your ears open, ask good questions. Summarize results. Because you may know something -- you may find out something -- that nobody else in the embassy knows.

When I was in Malaysia we were trying to sell FA-18 aircraft to the Malaysians, I remember that the GSO came up one day after the 1:00 pm Bahasa news and he said, "The government was just talking about the FA-18 sale versus MiGs and I just wanted you to know what they said." The GSO -- that was great because it meant we had succeeded in getting the mission's highest priorities to permeate everyone at the mission.

That is incidentally how one builds corridor reputation, I believe. It's when people sense not only that you're doing the job, but that you have internalized and are living the life. That's more than just the discipline; it is the sense that this is the profession you've chosen and the excitement, the psychic rewards, come by looking for the challenges, creating opportunities, and making things happen that have an impact -- whether for an individual or family, for a stakeholder, and ultimately for the good of the United States. Our work is meant to be "fun" (rewarding). Arnie used to talk about the thrill he got each day he pulled open the C Street door. I suppose it is a lot about leadership, at every level, ensuring our officers and staff have that sense that what each of them is doing is an important part of the work of the whole. It's a point that Secretary Powell underscored regularly.

Q: What about go or resign? Do you have strong views on that?

WOLF: Part of the larger question, what happens -- what happens when you really don't agree --

Q: Yes, and let's discuss that as a separate issue. I agree with that. I just don't want that post, it's too hot, there are too many bugs.

WOLF: Well, that didn't happen to me, but the term worldwide availability was in the contract one accepts. You simply got to go.

Q: Yeah, exactly.

Q: Worldwide availability.

WOLF: You go and you figure out how to make yours a great assignment. And here's a secret. Ken, you've served in some of those posts, which were true hardship posts, and people say regularly that some of the places where the hardships are the greatest, the morale is the highest.

Q: It's true.

WOLF: And it's because people line up together and they're in it together.

Q: That's right.

WOLF: If you have a leader who leads, then those are some of the most fun assignments. Da Nang didn't have any reason to be a fun place. But with Fred Brown as the principal officer it was hard not to have a lot of enthusiasm as a member of his team. Whereas when I went to Malaysia, people were telling me the first thing I needed to do was fight to get back the "hardship differential." Please, we were in a modern country/modern city with skyscrapers going up everywhere, new air conditioned malls, plentiful, healthy food (and fantastic fruit), one of the best international schools in Asia…it was a pretty sophisticated country, albeit it was always hot and humid. Houses and cars were air-conditioned, not like the first time Mahela and I were in Bangkok, where we almost were asphyxiated by truck diesel fumes during a non air-conditioned drive to the airport. That would have been a little trying on a daily basis. And KL's case paled compared to e.g., the current situation in China, with daily, dangerous smog. But, I don't think that is keeping most people away from Beijing because the challenges are there to be had.

Q: Yeah, it's really --

Q: Can you talk a bit about situations in which you get an assignment and you disagree with the policy?

WOLF: Probably that didn't happen until I was Assistant Secretary for NP, and there the issue was my disagreement with the views of the U/S. But in that instance, I had something of a get out of jail card. The deputy secretary had reminded me from the start

that while I reported through U/S Bolton, I worked for the president and secretary…and the Secretary wanted to hear my views, not simply have me reflect those of John Bolton

So I never was to the point where the policy was so obnoxious to me that I didn't feel like I couldn't advance it.

I remember getting off the plane in Perth and a reporter asked "Are you willing to die for your country?" (over Vietnam) My reply was something like I wasn't looking forward to dying any time soon, but if asked to fight I would.

I respect the people who decide that, because a policy is so abhorrent, they will resign. I hope that, had I ever been put in that situation, that I'd have the courage to do the same. There were people who did resign during Vietnam and later Iraq. I suppose the bottom line, though, is that either you state your opposition by resigning, or you accept leadership's decision and do your best to implement policy. That's the element of professionalism that is critical to our system of government. Passive opposition/obstruction within the ranks is not for me an acceptable alternative. There's only one President of the United States, one secretary of state, and they're the ones who lead. What irked me overtime were the people in the Bush (II) administration who conducted their own policy, even in contravention to decisions by the president.

Q: Sometimes you can be in a situation where you're not directly related to a policy you might find objectionable, but still have to, still have to --

WOLF: Explain it.

Q: Yes. And I find it --

WOLF: That did happen, especially in the field.

Q: Explain and defend.

WOLF: That's your job. And when you're not willing to do that job…

Q: You can distance yourself from that. There's kind of a middle ground in that. For example, I was not happy about my policy in Central America, but I was removed from Central America, I didn't have to deal with Central America. I had to deal with Africa. So I was taking a different way out. If I'd been required to do it then I would be faced with that dilemma that you had talked about.

WOLF: Right, but I suppose even in Africa, if an official took you on regarding U.S. policy in Central America, you had to defend it. That certainly was the case for me in Malaysia, where there was a barrage of criticism about our policies in Bosnia etc. I made the USG case, tho' probably without much passion since I thought for a long time we were too inclined to palm the problem off to Europe, which had proven itself feckless.

One way around was to explain US policy but point out that there were some/many in the U.S. who had other views, x, y, and z.

Q: Looking back on those 17 years and also looking forward to the rest of your career, were you ever involved in, confronted with, had to deal with EEO or grievance issues?

WOLF: Yes, there were I think two grievances on efficiency reports and/or failure to recommend for onward assignments. I was asked for a statement by the grievance board; I'm not aware the cases went any further than that.

Q: Do you think the grievance system works? Is it abused or does it sort of even out in the end?

WOLF: My two involvements I thought were an abuse -- even trying to be objective. But there are clearly times when people abuse their positions, and when subordinates are disadvantaged, and I suppose the grievance process is a necessary check against such abuses. Certainly the women's case in the 1970's was justified. But I was never aware of the grievance system.

I do think there's a risk of over-solicitousness, and I suspect these days there also is a tendency toward too much political correctness. That can sap the atmosphere of adventure that I thought was an important part of my career. And, it's not just inside the department. The got'cha syndrome is pervasive these days, in part because of political correctness, in part because of the 24/7 news cycle, and the growth of irresponsible use of social media. Everything is grievable, everything is litigated, everything is confrontational, and Congress loves nothing more than to stir around in issues that really fall well below my idea of legitimate oversight. To be honest, that wasn't my experience over most of my thirty plus years at State. Certainly there were interagency fights, and differences too with Congress. But most were fights over policy differences. They weren't theological debates where to oppose branded you as a heretic, and disloyal. That changed the last four years.

I think policymaking and the nation suffer now from too much wasted heat created throughout the system. I was listening to a hearing today on the way down here and it was clear that somebody was talking just to score points. My sense was that the speaker had no interest in hearing (Secretary Hagel's testimony). He came into the hearing to make a series of points criticizing the President, asked one question and was gone. There's too much of that between the Hill and the administration. But there's too much of that inside the administration, and in my last years there was too much of that within the Department as well. There apparently are more political appointees now at State occupying positions way down into the ranks -- not just at the A/S and above level, but as far down as office director, and these people are able to convert to CS and in essence burrow in with their prejudices. That vitiates the reason for a talented, apolitical career service. It's not good and it's not right.

Q: Do you think it can ever be changed? I know American Academy of Diplomacy have efforts to see if it can be changed.

WOLF: I don't know. It really is up to a president and secretary of state to decide that it is not the way the railroad will run when they are in charge. The White House can limit political appointments, but this current one has chosen not to do so. I would like to think that some of my heroes as secretary of state, if that genetic type came back again, would stand up and take on the dragon.

Q: During your time, do you identify certain secretaries of state who would be particularly strong in that regard, or stronger?

WOLF: The one who fits both in terms of leadership and influence was for me George Shultz. Dr. Kissinger and Jim Baker were highly influential but not as engaged with the building as an institution. Secretary Powell (and Rich Armitage) implemented several fundamentally important reforms in the way State operated, but had less impact on overall foreign policy than the three others I mentioned. I had no direct exposure at the time to Dr. Kissinger, and only some with Shultz. With Kissinger, I think, his focus was on getting more incisive and insightful analysis and policy options. His insistence on applying a strategic overlay to everything, I suspect, was new and different for a more "transactionally" inclined department bureaucracy.

An aside -- before President Bush (43) dispatched me in 2003 to oversee the Middle East Roadmap monitoring process, he met with me and stressed that he wanted me to work with the Palestinians on "building, institutions that were bigger than the people then in charge." I think that was the way George Shultz and Colin Powell approached their leadership roles, to leave behind a department where changes had been institutionalized.

What was special in Secretary Baker's case was his mind meld with President Bush (41). I saw him a lot closer up in my jobs as P Executive Assistant and then PDAS in the International Organizations Bureau (1989-1992, which overlapped with the first Gulf War). The UN played a key role in U.S. policy during the war, and we got the Secretary's attention (and help) whenever we needed it. He used to have lunch with his senior lieutenants every day that he was available in the building. If one needed a quick decision, you could get a note to him (or one of the deputies), they'd discuss it at lunch, and one would get an answer back that afternoon with his comments written in bold felt tip. And if it was really important he'd say, "Do it this way…I've checked it with the president." Something like that worked really well in interagency deliberations…for instance at the Pentagon I recall someone on the joint staff saying he thought Secretary Cheney might was to do it differently. But he backed away when I suggested that, if so, perhaps his secretary should check with the president…I knew Secretary Baker already had. So Baker was effective, but this special clout left when he left; it wasn't institutionalized.

Q: Well, let's back up.

WOLF: 1987.

Q: 1987 you went to NEA as Director of Regional Affairs.

WOLF: You'll recall the message to me in Islamabad was in essence go to NEA, don't stop in Amman. The regional affairs office reported directly to the PDAS and was his special projects staff. The director also ran NEA led task forces in the Operations Center when necessary. The office was responsible for nuclear matters (especially vis a vis Pakistan). It coordinated arms sales, including the congressional notification process. So pretty busy. NEA always seemed to have one crisis or another. Pakistan's nuclear program progressed unrelentingly. And we did a number of major arms sales cases, including equipment for Saudi Arabia's AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) and a major tank sale to Egypt -- both of which generated considerable concern on the Hill and with friends of Israel.

I also had a chance once to travel with Congressmen Levine and Torricelli, two of the biggest proponents of -- supporters of Israel. Their tour started in Israel but continued to Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Oman. And I will never forget -- for them it was like two kids. Their eyes were wide open at some of the things they saw on the second part of the trip. Iraq, yes, Saddam Hussein was there and in charge, but Baghdad was a reasonably cosmopolitan capital, women were working openly in the economy and the country seemed to be recovering well from its war with Iran. No doubt the secret police were on every street corner watching us, and I understand the hotel was wired for every kind of sound and light. But still, the society gave some appearances of openness. And in Saudi Arabia, Prince Bandar who was the ambassador to Washington had flown back to lead the tour. Saudi Arabia was a key ally in the Gulf, it was developing rapidly with its prodigious oil revenues, it was quickly improving its military weaponry, and every sale was controversial in the U.S., which meant we lost a number of sales to European sellers.

I remember we went to the airbase in Dhahran and when we toured through their command center, our U.S. Air Force escort officer's eyes bugged out. The Saudis had color monitors, all kinds of IT infrastructure, things that the Pentagon could only dream about then. And Bandar stopped outside a big NATO spec'ed hangar, where on command the heavy armored doors rolled back to reveal a Tornado, British fighter bomber, and all its associated armaments. Bandar said simply, you know, "This could have been an F15." Point to the congressman was, if the U.S. wouldn't sell to us; others would.

Q: Let me ask you. That trip altered the --

WOLF: I don't think so.

Q: -- views of --

WOLF: I suspect they internalized what they saw, but I don't think it weakened their support for Israel or reluctance to support controversial arms sales.

Q: Did you accompany any of the other CODELs?

WOLF: Not that I recall.

Q: You were really responsible for the relationship with the Congress. That came under you --

WOLF: Don't over hype the job -- we spent a lot of time working with the desks and hill staff as well as in the interagency, including the White House. The WH had an Office of Political Military Affairs at the time. They had a young major -- who later got promoted to lieutenant-colonel who was involved in a variety of areas including Central America. At one point I was asked to compete for the directors job of that office. I decided not to, fortunately since that was the office from which Col. Oliver North conducted his Iran-Contra business.

Q: How did it happen that you didn't go?

WOLF: I don't recall, though the myth was it fell apart over whether I'd get a parking pass. Anyway, that was a road best not taken.

Q: But that's interesting because I think a lot of people would have taken that just for a, from a career point of view, hey, I get to go to the White House.

WOLF: I suppose, but my alternative was to shift up to be U/S Michael Arm cost's Executive Assistant in P.

Q: Yeah, I mean I could understand that.

WOLF: -- It was the right job at the time.

Q: And did you have a military officer on your staff in NEA/RA?

WOLF: Yes, I did.

Q: And what role did he have? Was he full engaged in these things, or was he just more engaged in the defense?

WOLF: Col. John Bircher, our liaison to defense, had been a foreign area officer in North Africa and had served in the NEA region. He was fully integrated in an office with civil service and foreign service staff. He was good on in consultations on the Hill, and also was highly organized when it came to crisis management and work on task forces. Ed Djerejian was another great boss. He was very focused, but he had a wry sense of humor.

Q: He and I were in the army platoon leader's basic course at Fort Benning.

WOLF: Together?

Q: He was one row behind me.

WOLF: Well, I liked him.

Q: I'm still in touch with him occasionally, you know, in his present job. Are there other things that stand out about your time in Regional Affairs?

WOLF: There were a series of crises and NEA knew the drill. The most serious crisis was in fall, 1987, when we retaliated against an Iranian oil platform or set of oil platforms. The raid was retaliation for Iranian attacks against U.S. shipping in the Gulf. We created a task force in the Op Center to coordinate State's interaction with other agencies and embassies in the region. We weren't sure whether the world was going to war because the Russians were unhappy, the Middle East was aroused, and we were engaged militarily in, in the Persian Gulf. That also was the day when Wall Street melted down, so we had phones ringing off the hook in the task force, cables zipping in and out to assure embassies were secure and whatnot, and over our shoulders CNN was carrying a constant deathwatch on the stock market. I thought to myself "Well, I don't have a lot of money, what should I do, sell or buy…but t there was not a free second to call Fidelity, not even to go to the rest room. By the time the crisis in the Gulf was passed that evening, the markets had closed. Fortunately, the world didn't erupt, and the stock market settled down the next week.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Another crisis day was the day the USS Vincennes mistakenly shot down an Iranian civil aircraft. That was the first time that I saw how the "fog of war" can cause screw-ups when Washington tries to respond too quickly and without clear facts.

Q: What do you recall about the Vincennes incident?

WOLF: Simply the aftermath when DOD was trying to explain what happened. And every fact -- everything that the government put out as a fact in the first 12 hours -- turned out to have been wrong.

Q: Remind our readers what --

WOLF: So the cruiser shot down an Iranian civilian aircraft over the Persian Gulf thinking that it was a hostile attack on the Vincennes, a Ticonderoga class cruiser.

Q: Yeah.

WOLF: It was patrolling on the eastern side of the Gulf and was in the process of fending off an attack by Iranian gunboats. It misidentified an approaching aircraft that it thought displayed hostile intent -- but the plane was a civilian aircraft and several hundred people were killed.

Q: There was a debate over what signal the plane was sending out, wasn't there?

WOLF: Whatever, the fact is that it was a civilian aircraft. Everyone was affected by the reality of the event and the demands of the 24-hour press, which had then evolved.

Q: They wanted the answers.

WOLF: They wanted the answers and we didn't have them. The information that people put out quickly was overtaken by "new facts" -- but it took some time before it was clear what actually had happened.

Q: How long did it take to debate issues of compensation, responsibility, apology?

WOLF: I don't remember.

Q: Armacost got into that fairly deeply.

WOLF: I was still working in NEA at the time.

Q: Well, that was the biggie. Anything else before we move on?

WOLF: I suppose most importantly the Pakistan nuclear program just continued to go from bad to more bad.

Q: Mm-hmm.

WOLF: We had very good intelligence sources; and we knew a lot about what A.Q. Khan and his collaborators were doing, although (speaking with the benefit of hindsight) we did not know that by then he also was creating his own nuclear supply system for other countries.

We had an annual, legislative requirement in order to continue military or economic aid to Pakistan under which the President had to certify that to the best of our knowledge, Pakistan did not have a nuclear weapon -- it was a negative certification that we had to do. Each year, it became more and more torturous. It was possible, for a number of years, to make that certification since we had no proof positive that Pakistan had completed a weapon -- in essence we could certify as long as they were a screw turn away. The process of concluding that, though, became increasingly Talmudic. And eventually the evidence was too shaky to certify

Q: You really had to calibrate your language.

WOLF: Yes, how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

Q: What would be an example of coming close?

WOLF: We were able to keep close tabs on their enrichment program, and as I mentioned we had very good intelligence about the weapons design process and the work they did milling their fissile material. The only thing we didn't have was conclusive evidence that they put all the pieces together.

Q: So you would explain all that and then come to that conclusion.

WOLF: Yes, but we also had to be able to explain our conclusions in annual briefings to Congress -- where members had access to most, if not all, of the intelligence. Well, you had to argue all that out and then it all became of the record.

Q: Classified briefings.

WOLF: It's probably not surprising that successive administrations dragged out the process until the Soviets left Afghanistan. By 1989-1990, the certification process required twisting facts like a pretzel, and in due course President Bush decided not to make the certification required to continue most foreign assistance, including government-to-government military sales.

Q: You were in all these assessments. Did the national intelligence estimates play a role?

WOLF: Yes, it was a whole of government process.

Q: Interagency --

WOLF: We had a lot of information collected by a number of agencies. That's one that the intelligence community did really well.

Q: How long were you in the NEA/RA?

WOLF: I suppose a year and a half.

Q: So you went to RA in '88?

WOLF: I went to RA in '87 and I went up to P in '88 I think.

Q: '88, OK.

WOLF: And I was there in '88 and some part of '89; then I went to IO. My friends and family joked I couldn't hold a job.

Q: (laughs) You kept moving around.

WOLF: Yes, I had been broken out early from Australia, Vietnam and Greece. And then I was broken out of EB to go to T. Worse than the moves, but not related, several of the

places I served (Australia, Vietnam, and Greece) had government changes shortly after I left.

Q: Well, some of these jobs that you talked about are very time intensive. What did that do to your family life?

WOLF: My children still talk to me. My wife too.

Q: You were working long, long hours.

WOLF: Honestly, it wasn't easy, and I can see in the rear-view mirror that some of the choices I (we) made meant I wasn't as available as I might have been had I opted for a less intensive career path. I don't think I was a workaholic; I didn't linger at work just to be there. But several of the assignments, T, Pakistan, NEA and P were highly work intensive. In Pakistan, actually, we lived right around the corner and I had a lot of time with family. In Washington, we weren't far from the Department, but the hours were incredibly long. Things improved a bit once there were cell-phones, and I wasn't tied so tightly to the phones at work. My tour as PDAS in IO was incredible for the hours, but that reflected the first Gulf War and the central role of the UN.

Q: Secretariat too, I guess.

WOLF: The Operations Center was the best. We operated on three teams. We arrived a half an hour or 45 minutes early to read in, and we were expected to leave shortly after the end of our shift, even if the telephones were ringing off the hook. My wife loved it. I think I said before we were living part of the time at Columbia Plaza before we bought our house.

Q: That was convenient.

WOLF: For my children, their experiences in Pakistan and Malaysia are indelible parts of their persona. Both have visited Malaysia as young adults, and my daughter remains in touch on Facebook with friends from both Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur.

I'd imagine FS life would be even harder for two worker families. My wife taught in Australia and Greece, and worked with refugees in Vietnam and Pakistan. Once my daughter was born in 1977, Mahela stayed at home -- so we always had that stability. She was the primary force when the children were growing up. I mention cell-phones, which allowed one to stay in touch -- but also allowed others to reach out to touch you. My daughter blanched when the phone rang once at the Orioles game.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: I think she may have dived under her seat. But I also recall being able to attend one of my son's soccer games while negotiating with London on the text of a Gulf War resolution.

Q: Yeah.

WOLF: Before that, I was anchored to my desk and, since the Security Council operated often into the middle of the night, we needed access to the office fax machine to see the latest texts. Another reason that I needed to stay at the office was that A/S Bolton used to leave for home usually by 6 pm, even when the SC was in session. But not infrequently after CNN would report on the ongoing meetings our drop-line to the Secretary would ring, with Jim Baker wanting clarifications or to issue new instructions for me to relay to Ambassador Pickering. A couple of times, those calls from the Secretary were quite colorful.

Q: Going back, in 1988 you went to work for Mike Armacost.

WOLF: Yes.

Q: You were his --

WOLF: Executive assistant.

Q: Executive assistant. And what did that involve? You dealt with whatever was important to him.

WOLF: I managed his office -- and monitored paper going to/from him. "Monitor" is perhaps more passive than it was; I did a lot of outreach to bureaus to assure that paper coming to the U/S met his needs, was fully thought out, and fully coordinated. I stayed deeply involved with matters related to Pakistan's nuclear program, as well as the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. I was his liaison to the extent he needed one with INR. But the A/S, Mort Abramowitz, was one of his closest friends and used to spend a good bit of time in P schmoozing with Mike or us on staff.

The P staff included special assistants for Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. I read everything. Also, a key person on the staff was Eva Kim, who was by title secretary to the U/S, but who really was a force of nature. She was one of the top FS staff people, and had been working at the top since the 1960's when she was Ambassador Bunker's, then Ambassador Martin's, secretary in Saigon. She was one those people capable of doing something with each hand, even while talking about something else. So I don't want to overdo my role in organizing Mike. Eva Kim organized Mike to the extent that Mike needed organization. But I managed the flow of materials.

Q: Did you decide what he got to see?

WOLF: Yes, but with MHA we tended to err on the side of more than less. Some of my predecessors plowed through every word of every piece of paper that came to P. I wasn't that thorough. I developed the knack of speed vetting, especially the intelligence, which came in piles. Mike's ability though to ingest material, remember facts, and tie things

together was prodigious. On one trip, for so called "super regional talks" with his Soviet counterpart, we hauled along two, huge notebooks, three-inch thick ones, jammed with briefing memos and intelligence and stuff like that. MHA used the whole flight over to plow through the books, and to take notes on a five-by-eight pad. By the time we landed, he had gone through everything and reduced it to 20 or so pages of notes. By the time he went to the meetings the next day, he had only a couple pages of tick-points (subjects) to raise. I recall that at one point in a discussion of Iran he got into attitudes among "bazaaris" (merchants). While it was one of the materials I had read, his command of the facts/stats was for me a bit like a religious experience, watching the master….

Q: Did you go on most of his trips?

WOLF: Yes.

Q: And did you sit in as a note taker in his meetings?

WOLF: Usually there was a note taker from the embassies.

Q: You got to sit in.

WOLF: But I sat in, and was able to clear off on most of the subsequent memoranda of conversations, though key meetings went to MHA for approval.

Q: Did you have any influence on whom he saw, did they filter it through you or did that go through Eva Kim?

WOLF: Many requests Eva handled directly; but she coordinated closely with me. There were a lot of people who would come up during any day; a number she'd divert to me. The U/S couldn't see everybody, he was so busy.

Q: So you would convey --

WOLF: Yes, I'd summarize for him.

WOLF: In terms of outreach, the P executive assistant job is a super opportunity (and I think it's categorized at the as DAS level). I got to interact with most of the assistant secretaries and DAS's, and a bunch of office directors if their issues were on the U/S's agenda. Fair to say I got my phone calls returned quickly. That's not because I was important, personally, but rather people knew I acting on MHA's behalf. While I've seen 7th Floor staff presume to act as if they were the U/S, I always told our staff to remember we were like shadows -- the U/S was the light. If the light wasn't there, we didn't exist. Our job was not to impose our personal views in the policy process. I didn't want staff acting or speaking in the U/S's stead, unless we were pretty certain we knew his views.

Q: What about influencing him in policy regards, either in choice of information he got, the way you put a spin on some information that you did get, somebody had something, something somebody had to say?

WOLF: He did want the staff's views, and generally the special assistants put notes on top of paper going to the U/S…and I sometimes added my own, depending on the issue. In meetings we attended, we were generally listeners, unless we had special knowledge.

So, most of the time we generated quick notes, including at times during meetings. Where the U/S had views to pass on to the Secretary, he'd do (or ask us to draft) short notes that he put on top of papers from the bureaus. Actually, Mike Armacost did that more often than Bob Kimmitt, since Bob frequently saw Secretary Baker at the informal lunch's Baker had with his key advisors. While I saw most of the notes principals did, since they were distributed by S/S, few of those notes ever got back to the working bureaus. The principals' thoughts were privileged communications. When I worked in P, the U/S never spent a lot of time crafting the bureaus' options memos -- which he viewed as properly the work of A/S's. That was a quite different, and a much more effective process, than I experienced 10 years later when I was in NP. Bolton wanted to negotiate every word in bureaus' memos.

Q: So you were in touch with the bureaus?

WOLF: Constantly and at all hours….

Q: After Armacost you went to work for Kimmitt.

WOLF: Yes, MHA left at the end of the Reagan Administration (and went out as Ambassador to Japan). Bob Kimmitt moved over from Treasury with Secretary Baker.

Q: How long with Armacost and how long with Kimmitt?

WOLF: I'm going to guess it was about a year with Mike until the election in January, something less than a year with Kimmitt. I went off to IO sometime in the summer/fall of 1989.

Q: So what were the key events with Kimmitt?

WOLF: The first big thing was Tiananmen Square.

Q: Say again?

WOLF: Tiananmen Square, the Chinese student uprising in late spring, 1989. This was a major challenge for the new administration while it was still organizing itself.

Q: Yes.

WOLF: It was interesting to contrast experiences with two different U/S's. Armacost of course had a long history in the building and EAP; he knew how it worked; and people knew how he worked. Bob came over from Treasury, and our problems with China broke out before the building (or I) had adapted ourselves to Bob's style. And there were still teething problems in terms of paper flow between the Department and the WH. I recall, early on in the crisis, the U/S was scheduled to call in China's Ambassador. Anyway, the Ambassador arrived as scheduled, but the WH hadn't finished clearing off on the "non-paper" RMK was to give the ambassador. While the ambassador waited pretty patiently, the U/S was pretty unhappy with his executive assistant, the Department in general, and the WH. It was bad enough that it happened once, but there was a repeat a couple days later…again waiting for the cleared paper. Anyway, we all survived, and things went much better. In short order, Bob developed excellent working relations with key people in a number of bureaus, he had his own network of people, and he was excellent in terms of getting points across without sounding like he was using talking points.. In that respect, he was a lot like MHA.

Q: Major contrast between the way Armacost and Kimmitt operated?

WOLF: Mike was more reserved.

Q: Came from an academic background.

WOLF: Yes, he was more measured, and certainly less volatile. Bob was…more kinetic, and it took a couple months before he really hit his stride at State -- but when he did, he became one of the better P under secretaries I recall, in part because of his policy smarts, and in part because of his very close ties to the Secretary. By the time the Gulf War broke out he was enormously effective in his job, and his military training (West Point) gave him special insights. During the war, he was like the chief operating officer for a lot of what went on during the Gulf War.

Q: Did you have reason to have interface with Larry Eagleburger?

WOLF: I got to know Larry Eagleburger when I was working in T. U/S Schneider used to have two lives, one in the State Department and one wherever the rest of his life was spent, as I joked, in his beeper, because he had no known Washington address.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: After he left in the evening, usually for a meeting/dinner with someone on the Hill, we were a bit on our own. Not infrequently U/S Eagleburger would call down asking for Schneider and follow up with an exasperated… "okay, if he's not there send down Wolf." LSE was no non-sense, but he was policy focused, impatient, and knew the building. While gruff on the exterior, he was fun to work with, and he certainly was colorful.

Q: Yes, indeed.

Q: So the IO job came around in '89?

WOLF: Right.

Q: And you became --

WOLF: Principal deputy.

Q: The PDAS in IO.

WOLF: Right.

Q: And who was assistant secretary at that time?

WOLF: John Bolton.

Q: Bolton was, OK.

WOLF: That was really interesting. I had first run into Bolton, as I mentioned, when he was at AID and I was in T doing foreign assistance. At the time, our integrated budget process as seen as antagonistic to AID's interest, but I suppose when we proved we could make the whole pie bigger, they slowly became converts. Indeed, at one point, Bolton tried to get me to come over to head the AID/food aid office. So we had some prior contact.

He had really set views on what he wanted to do vis a vis policy toward the UN system, and in terms of reorganizing IO. At the time, IO's profile was not as high as it would be after the Gulf War. While the USG used the UN system to pursue a variety of political, social and economic development issues, the UN (and our effectiveness) was hampered by large arrearages that the Reagan Administration had allowed to pile up.

The IO that John came to head was an IO that was broken into three pieces and it operated like three separate bureaus, political, social, and economic; each DAS was like a world apart, and there was little consistency in policy across the bureau for individual specialized agencies and programs. It was the Balkans. Administratively, too, IO had as its long time executive director a career civil servant who had little time for the IO front office. People up there came and went; he was going to stay.

Q: Wasn't Bolton on top of that? Did he not want --

WOLF: That world changed the day John Bolton came. He demolished stovepipes; he changed personnel; and he was relentless in pursuing the concept of a "unitary UN." It took time, but we worked agency by agency, focused both on policy and budget. And, while our policy for the agencies was "zero real growth," JRB also was relentless in pressing inside the Administration to pay down the arrearages. While there wasn't much

support inside State, Bolton had one strategic card to play, and that was that the President of the United States had been the permanent representative to the United Nations. And so if the issue could get from the State Department to the White House there was little doubt where the president's sympathies lay. But to get the issues framed for the president was a struggle. Not for the last time, Bolton used personal relationships to bypass State leadership to get issues to sympathetic ears at the White House.

Q: Were there some arrearages that he was less worried about?

WOLF: Well, I don't remember in terms of the specialized agencies, but in terms of the UN itself we were determined to get paid up.

Q: Get the money.

WOLF: The symbolism was huge. If we wanted the UN to do things that the U.S. saw as in its national interests, we needed to be current on our obligations. There is sometimes the impression the UN is some free-standing entity, but what the UN really is it a membership forum, and every member (sometimes groups of members) wanted to steer. For us, we needed the UN especially on issues like the Gulf War, but many others including in 1989 the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and later the Cambodia peace talks. Specialized agencies like the ones on aviation and health or the World Food Program (and its support for displaced persons) were important for us.

IO had been a staffing backwater, and to reignite it we needed to staff up. In general, functional bureaus have a hard time recruiting Foreign Service officers. We worked hard to change that at least vis a vis IO. I learned that to find good people one has to offer them good jobs, give them opportunities to shine, and then assure they have good onward assignments. Recruiting is more than just posting a vacancy list -- recruiting is an active process. That wasn't so hard with IO/UNP, the office that dealt mainly with UN political issues and the Security Council. Regional bureaus competed to put very good people there because, to the extent that issues were going to be worked in the United Nations, bureaus wanted to have people working the issues whom they trusted.

It was a lot harder staffing offices that worked the specialized agencies, but I had my own earlier experience in IO/AGR on which to draw, and it helped me to shape our recruiting efforts. I believe we did okay in that respect.

There was one U.N. issue that was like a fire-bell for Bolton, and that was the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Whenever the issue of observer status, or projects arose, wherever they arose, Bolton raced to beat it down. He wasn't subtle in his negotiating style, and threatened all manner of harm/withdrawal of U.S. funding, whatever it took. He was a bit like the image of the kid with his thumb in the dike, but he only had two thumbs and that were a dozen agencies. Over time, the PLO established, and then expanded, its beachhead.

Bolton's other big thing was repeal of the UN's "Zionism is a form of racism" resolution (UNGA Res 3379) passed in 1965. Correctly, he saw the resolution as a blot on the United Nations and a lightening rod in the United States for critics of the UN system. The issue was hugely political on the Hill.

Q: Did he ever try it?

WOLF: He made a lot of runs at the Secretary, seeking approval to launch a repeal effort, but it wasn't until after the Gulf war, in late 1991, that the Secretary gave a green light. He gave us just two weeks to win, or drop the initiative. Being John's deputy, I was wired for hating Res. 3379. We went at it 24/7 for two weeks, working hand in glove with the Dutch, who were then the president of the EC. We couldn't have had a better partner. We were able to basically work a 24-hour day, with the Dutch working from their start of business until we came online 5-6 hours later.

Bolton's strategy was to get a majority of members as cosponsors, thereby obviating opponents' option to defer action procedurally. We called in foreign ambassadors, we phoned our ambassadors all around the world, and we sent reams of cables with updates and further instructions. The whole episode was exhilarating. I recall some of the regional bureaus were unenthusiastic about the number of chits we called and gave, but Bolton simply blew through them. For 14 days, it was like IO was handed the world.

Q: IO ruled.

WOLF: Indeed. This was *all* hands on deck, no holds barred.

Q: So this new resolution reversed the Zionism-an-Racism --

WOLF: Yes. Repealed it.

Q: That's a major accomplishment.

WOLF: And was important. The original resolution had been a stain on the UN, and a real impediment to sustaining U.S. public and congressional support.

Q: Do you remember the vote?

WOLF: 111-25, with a number of abstentions.

Q. Other IO highlights?

WOLF: We had the Cambodia peace talks. We used the P-5 (five permanent members of the UN Security Council) as a forum to create a framework for a peace settlement by the four Khmer parties Cambodia had been unstable for 15 years following first the Khmer Rouge ouster of Sihanouk then the Vietnamese invasion in 1978. The P-5 forum was a rotating forum designed to operate outside the normal UNSC NY missions. There were a

number of sessions rotating between France and the US, with a final session in Thailand with the Cambodian parties. Bolton went to one/a couple of the meetings; I went to the rest, including a pivotal meeting in Paris.

Q: Talks in Paris…

WOLF: There is no place like Paris for negotiations. The French hosted the group at the Crillon Hotel, and the refreshments set a standard I never saw before or after. Whether talks were expedited or not by France's profiteroles is an open question.

As warm as was the hospitality at these meetings was, the atmosphere in the room was generally chilly, with the Chinese holding fast against every idea, whether from the Russians, UK, France or U.S. It may have been at another meeting, but I recall the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister sitting stone rigid when a proverbial fly landed on his nose and he didn't move a muscle. The talks were largely like that

The P-5 goal was to create a framework for a peace settlement, including a role for the UN during a transitional period. The big variable was what would be the powers of the UN special administrator, with some wanting the UN to have absolute authority, China wanting it to have minimal authority. Delegations tried one after another with no agreement by China. Until we (I) threw out the wording "such powers as may be necessary," to which China's delegate responded "That'll work."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: The talk ended with one final, and memorable evening in Pattaya, Thailand which I attended. There we were, representatives of the P-5 countries, in an outer circle of tables, plus the four Cambodian parties at the inner circular table. And it was hard to escape the irony of Prince Sihanouk clinking glasses with leaders of the Khmer Rouge, who had murdered part of his family and hundreds of thousands of Cambodians. It was one of those events where, after dinner, there wasn't enough water in the shower to wash off the way one felt. I was pretty sure Bolton didn't want on his CV that he attended that dinner. But those talks did help end the war. That was a huge plus for the UN and for U.S. interests in Southeast Asia.

However from August 1990, our time was otherwise fully engaged by war in the Gulf. I was Acting A/S; Bolton was on travel. I went to see a baseball game the night of August 1. We had had a discussion between State, the WH etc., triggered by alarming intel from the Gulf, and considered whether to convene the UNSC in emergency session. In the end, we decided to wait. So I went off to see the Orioles play. I was there with Bill Milam. And when we got back in my car to drive back to Washington my cell phone, (one of those big brick shaped things I had left in the car) was ringing off the hook. It was one of the other deputies, Jackie Wilcox, frantically looking for me to get me back to work. We turned on the news and sped back to Washington. By the time I arrived, there was a task force assembled in the Op Center, and U/S Kimmitt was in the CIVETS (secure conferencing facility) conferring with the interagency deputies committee. The UNSC

also was just convening and Bob's instructions were simple: "Get a resolution that deplores this and turns it around" and do it tonight!

When a draft came down at midnight, it read something like "The Security Council looks with great alarm and calls on Iraq to withdraw." I didn't think it was strong enough; it wasn't mandatory (under Chapter VII of the UN Charter), and there was no timeline for action. When I slipped in to show it to Kimmitt he agreed and told us to get it fixed. The initial view from NY was that if we wanted a resolution by sunrise the draft was the best we'd get.

I went off to phone Ambassador Pickering and to tell him we needed something stronger. After some resistance from our permrep, his deputy and political counselor, we all got ourselves aligned and Pickering went to work. The goal was crystal clear and there's no one better equipped for such negotiations. I don't know what Tom did, but once he understood that Washington wanted a mandatory resolution under chapter seven with a firm deadline, he spent the next five hours hammering all and sundry to get it done. And when the sun came up, we had Resolution 660, which set parameters for UN (and U.S.) policy for the rest of the Gulf War. The resolution demanded that Iraq withdraw its forces unconditionally from Kuwait to the positions in which they were located on 1 August 1990, the day before the invasion of Kuwait.

That resolution became the template against which all the succeeding resolutions and *all of our* actions were measured. It set the mission for creating a coalition eventually numbering thirty-four and was the basis in the end for Resolution 678 which authorized the use of force. So Resolution 660 was huge and it passed unanimously, I believe with just one abstention (from Yemen). I was interested in the Malaysian position, which I would come to know better a few years later when I served there. Countries like Malaysia, which were ambiguous at the time about the U.S. as a large power, looked at this resolution and said, "This is our protection. This is the UN acting for the protection of small countries." And they were *strong* advocates for the resolution.

Q: The original resolution you were seminal in setting the stage. You were saying --

WOLF: I started the snowball rolling. USUN did the actual negotiations.

Q: OK, so you go ahead.

WOLF: For seven months then, it was all hands on deck seemingly 24/7. The Security Council met day and *night*. You asked about family life. During this period, I was rarely home and even then there were constant phone calls. My day started with a Department crisis meetings at 7:00 or 7:30. While most of the negotiating and a lot of the drafting was done in New York, a number of the resolutions started with my team in IO then went back and forth as the Council met in closed sessions to negotiate texts. They all came down to us in IO, where we coordinated comments within the Department and interagency as needed. While we worked closely with NEA, the division of responsibilities meant IO took the lead on the UN matters, while NEA led on diplomacy

in the region. We had an L lawyer who was in attendance with us around the clock, and provided critical input to our work. I'll be forever grateful to Molly Williamson and her team in IO/UNP -- they were tireless. There was no iPhone, no Android, indeed no email. Everything came by *fax.* Pickering had a cell phone; he invented cell phone diplomacy I think. The trouble was, he sometimes would turn his phone off, which was inconvenient when we had instructions the Secretary wanted us to pass to Pickering ASAP.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: But usually there was somebody in the mission whom we could contact…and get word to TRP in the closed session. But inevitably I spent a lot of time working between our very strong willed permanent representative and an equally strong willed Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. My role was kind of like the shuttlecock being slammed back and forth, and sometimes into the net. This happened less often vis a vis the Gulf, often on the Middle East, and even more on issues where there was little seventh floor engagement. They rarely saw see eye-to-eye on anything.

We finally got to the point on the Gulf where it was apparent military force would be needed (the sanctions having failed to dislodge Iraq). The key was crafting the appropriate terminology, language to which all UNSC members would subscribe. We drafted in IO (w/ USUN) a number of phrases and then Secretary Baker traveled all over meeting every UNSC foreign minister to consult on the language. In the end, the formulation "all necessary means" was used to authorize military action vs. Iraq (and every other UN operation since where Chapter VII use of force would be authorized).

Q: All necessary means.

WOLF: Baker traveled all around Europe and the Middle East, and even to Hawaii to meet the Malaysians -- 30 something thousand miles in a couple of weeks, consulting, crafting. Following passage of Resolution 678, Desert Storm quickly dislodged Iraq. It was a time when the UN took a stand. For the USG, it also was government operating in a crisis in a way that I don't ever remember seeing during my career. The president and PM Thatcher had agreed at the start on the policy, which endured throughout. The secretaries of state, defense, treasury, etc., took charge of their areas, options were deliberated at the deputies' level, and once approved by the cabinet, we executed. Working with USUN, IO was responsible for driving the UN process. In addition to Ambassador Pickering, we had a host of super talent on the case -- Alex Watson, Jim Cunningham, Danny Russel, all of whom were or became among America's best envoys.

One of the points still debated is the way the war ended, as Iraq's forces were being hammered on their flight out of Kuwait. The decision by President Bush, Chairman Powell etc., was to halt the pursuit, rather then to continue what was very deadly harassment of Iraq's retreat. Some argued for the coalition to continue on to Baghdad and to dislodge Saddam Hussein. The decision was to not do that and a key part of the rationale was that it would constitute mission creep beyond the UN terms of reference, the authority set in Res 660, to rid Kuwait of Iraqi forces. There was concern that the

coalition would fracture. Also Washington worried re reactions across the Middle East, where the very public nature of the thrashing Iraqi forces were taking risked provoking hostile reactions in the street.

Q: But in your view the decision was the right one?

WOLF: Yes, though it might have been possible to do more to disarm the Revolutionary Guard south of Basra and to limit Iraq's air mobility. Overall, though, hindsight is as they say 20/20. And no one then was saying if we don't slaughter the rest of Iraq's forces we'll have to fight them again in 10-15 years.

Q: Maybe just started the problem sooner, Sunnis, Shiites, et cetera.

WOLF: Perhaps, but I'm not sufficiently expert to judge. What I know looking back was that the U.S., building built a successful multilateral coalition, with authority grounded in the UN Charter, and rid Kuwait of its Iraqi occupation. Go to Kuwait today and there's not a red, white, and black flag flying over it.

Q: Was April Glaspie treated fairly?

WOLF: I don't know the answer to that.

Q: Apparently she was talking on the basis of established policy.

WOLF: She was the only one who lost when the music stopped. A decade later after September 11, it was Mary Ryan who took the rap, when no one else was held accountable. Or Eric Boswell after Benghazi. Perhaps each was in a way culpable; as I suppose I was for helping reach a wrong conclusion about Iraq's WMD in 2002-2003. But in every case, there were people more senior for whom there was no accountability for a failed policy.

Q: Well, that's something --

WOLF: We'll come back to --

Q: -- we certainly want to come back to.

WOLF: In any event, my time in IO was very satisfying. We did some important things, not just in terms of issues like Iraq and Cambodia, but also in terms of promoting program prioritization across the UN system via our instance on zero real growth, by the US pay down of its arrearages, and with the repeal of Res 3379.

Q: Real principle I think. Overall, what was it like working for John Bolton?

WOLF: John was mercurial and had a hair trigger temper…but that first time working for him couldn't have been all bad, 'cause he helped me get my NP post a decade later…and

I agreed to work for him. John is one of the smartest people I know. He was almost always the best-prepared person in the room. He is highly opinionated and it takes a lot of convincing to move him off his position -- though interestingly, when he saw that he had a losing hand, he often just absented himself from the issue, before he was overruled (at least that was his modus operandi in IO). We got along; there was never a question that he was the boss -- though periodically we had some vigorous argument on process -- like when he'd instruct me, for instance, to instruct USUN on a Middle East question without seeking clearances in NEA or from S/P (Dennis Ross). He as very hard though on people more junior in IO, and when I was traveling, I was always worried that there was not buffer between JRB and the operational level. I think he fired the head of UNP three or four times.

Q. Different directors?

WOLF: No, same person. It was a talented office but I often had a chance to play the buffering role as PDAS.

Q: Was it true that he threw a stapler at somebody?

WOLF: I don't recall that…certainly not at me. Perhaps this may be a bit of revisionist hyperbole. Certainly, he was a bully, and had no compunction especially about lashing out at junior staff. That trait got worse the next time I worked with him.

Q: Maybe that was a later story.

WOLF: Yes. In his time as assistant secretary I think people respected his -- the issues he was working on. For many, his bluntness was off-putting, but often, when this happened, it was because he was already better informed than the action officer. He didn't invite discussion or debate of issues, simply expected acquiescence. I was at a level where I could push back, but the more junior staff really couldn't. On the issues, he/we did break some crockery establishing the bureau would act as a "unitary" bureau -- just as we expected on broad budget and policy issues that there should be a "unitary UN." Once staff in IO got over the sort of despair of their fiefdom being invaded, I think most of the bureau thought the bureau going in the right direction. There was a certain amount of eye-rolling in IO, and in NEA, whenever he mounted up and sallied out to do battle with the PLO. While he did embody our national policy on the issue, for John it was personal. To be sure, we needed to succeed, since these issues would have poisoned the efforts he championed, for instance, to have the US repay its UN system-wide arrearages, and to promote the UN effectiveness as a tool we could use in our foreign policy.

I had a lot of respect for all this, and especially his relentlessness on Zionism/Racism. I was proud of our partnership -- and I did go back to work with him nine years later.

Q: What about working with Pickering? It wasn't a physically close relationship. You must have been in touch frequently.

WOLF: Almost every day, sometimes many times, and even more often with Alex Watson, Pickering's principal deputy. Pickering and Bolton were both incredibly smart, and always prepared. But professionally, and philosophically, they were polar opposites. Tom could/would negotiate with anyone. Bolton's style was to take no prisoners, don't just get mad, get even. Pickering knew an antagonist today might be a necessary ally tomorrow. Tom didn't take well to IO oversight. In times past, the UN permanent representative had been considered to have cabinet rank; that wasn't true in the Bush/Baker org chart. Pickering often tried to use his connections on the Seventh Floor, generally with Larry Eagleburger, but Bolton had good relations too with Baker's inner-circle…and quite often the end result from a frustrated group of principals was "Couldn't you all just figure it out?"

Q: Can we all just get along?

WOLF: And not infrequently, it wasn't just Bolton sending instructions with which USUN had problems. Sometimes, it was simply because we were telling them "That's what the secretary wants." Quite often, either because he was traveling, or simply didn't want to argue with Pickering, he'd have me deliver the message to Pickering or Alex Watson. I wasn't the assistant secretary; Pickering had been an ambassador since way back, when I was practically a kid in shorts and knee socks. So it was not easy being the shuttlecock. And it wasn't just the Pickering/Bolton conundrum -- Bolton was often at policy loggerheads with Dennis Ross, who headed S/P, and his then junior staffer, Bill Burns. Bolton had very pronounced views about what should happen in the Middle East, often quite at odds with what Ross wanted done -- and Pickering often had a third set of views. It was my task generally to find a path through…

Q: You were kind of in the middle, huh?

WOLF: …and I spent lot of evening wondering the back corridors working with Bill Burns to find that path. I remember once John said, "I'm the assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs. And I'm telling you to do it!!!" and I had to find a way to convince him that, on issues that involved the Middle East, or other bureaus, he couldn't unilaterally override the views of the people who had operational lead. We made it work. That was my job and I had a great team helping us in IO/UN.

Q: Why don't we call a halt for now. And next time --

WOLF: Malaysia!

Q: Any more on IO--

WOLF: No really…summing up, it was a time for which I'm extremely proud and grateful. Proud of what we did; grateful to many super people who worked really long hours to get things done. The U.S. paid its bills. We fixed a number of problems in the way the UN system operated; we kept the PLO at bay; we helped organize the framework to force Iraq out of Kuwait and to end conflict in Cambodia. We repealed Res 3379.

Q: We could have a real sense of accomplishment.

WOLF: Yes. This was the first job where I had a direct hand in policy leadership and it provided a foundation on which I built for the next 15 years.

Q: Today is November 13th -- I'm sorry, today is November 18th. And we are resuming the interview with Mr. John Wolf. John, we've talked about your time in IO. Is there anything you'd like to add?

WOLF: Just a couple of things, I think. One, I talked about the work that the bureau did. And I don't think I emphasized enough how much we gained from a dedicated group of Civil Service people who had a deep familiarity with the many policy and technical issues of the UN specialized agencies. I talked about a number of issues where IO/UNP had the lead, and there we had strong people -- all the regional bureaus contributed to that. But, "unitary UN" meant we also cared about what was happening all across the system -- in a dozen -- more -- specialized agencies and programs. In that work, we drew a lot on Civil Service people who had deep issue expertise. These programs weren't without their problems for sure, but I knew from my earlier tour in IO's Agriculture Office that there was interesting and important work being done by programs like the World Food Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization etc. And the same could be said for the International Civil Aviation Organization, IAEA, the World Health Organization, etc. There's always a question about Foreign Service vs. Civil Service. From my perspective, both play key roles in advancing U.S. foreign policy. Both worked on policy formulation, both traveled abroad, and both services provided terrific representatives of the United States. And so, my goal I guess as the principal deputy was to provide the big tent and to draw on all of their various expertises. There were a lot of areas outside the limelight that nevertheless advanced America's interests.

I found this again when I went to NP where there was potential tension between the roles of the FS and CS. Some people short-change the work the CS does, and indeed the importance of the many multilateral fora in which the U.S. participates. In my view, as we get further and further into a multifaceted world with complicated international issues playing out across a complicated international tapestry (and with our own increasingly complicated domestic tapestry of agencies that are involved with international issues), the artificial distinction that was drawn in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 makes little sense. The 1980 Act asserts the FS should have the principal policy lead. I think the best-qualified person, irrespective of service, should lead, and we achieved that in IO, and again in NP where by deputy, Susan Burk, was a gifted Civil Service member. The State Department's leadership role in foreign policy certainly has been eclipsed by an increasingly assertive NSC staff, and other agencies that want to be players (or even to have their own foreign policies). But the answer is not simply to reassert FS "prerogatives." It's much more (as Ambassador Marc Grossman said in another forum) about identifying how advancing U.S. national security requires the kind of diplomatic leadership that a strong State Department can provide -- then thinking through the organizational, recruitment, training issues that will help position State that way.

Presidents, and even more their WH staffs, often want to take hands on control -- but my sense is that risks shutting out people with experience and expertise, and it risks also disenfranchising people at State and across government who are needed to implement the nation's complicated foreign policy agenda.

Something else, related but different, is the quality of people whom other countries put in their IO portfolios. As principal deputy I had a number of annual bilateral discussions, like the ones I talked about that Mike Armacost had, where my counterpart and I would discuss issues all across the UN system. I remember in particular talks with my Soviet counterpart, Andrei Kozyrev -- it was still the Soviet Union—at least until the USSR collapsed, and Andrei became first foreign minister of the new Russian Republic. His colleague on the economic side -- with whom I also met -- was Sergey Lavrov, who has been now the longtime Russian Foreign Minister. They're illustrative of the quality of people who had the UN portfolios in foreign ministries, but there were many other extraordinarily qualified people -- quite often the best in service for most developing countries, and several in Western Europe.

I remember one special vignette from my conversation with Kozyrev. We were meeting in Geneva, a fall day, and the two of us had a long (long) lunch at "La Perle du Lac" -- a great restaurant on the lake's edge. He was paying I think. Anyway, we went for walk along the lake after lunch, the sun was getting low in the sky and it was pretty damn cold. But we were walking and talking. I brought up the question of Zionism/Racism and our desire to see the resolution repealed. The Soviet Union had been one of the original sponsors of Res. 3379. Kozyrev expressed great curiosity in the subject, noting that in the Soviet Union there was little objective information available. While I'm Jewish, I didn't profess to be an expert -- but told him I knew people who really were. He asked me …"Can you send me some books?" When I returned to the U.S. I called our family rabbi who was a leader of U.S. Reform Judaism, and asked his advice. He sent me a half a dozen books from his private collection and I pouched the books to Moscow. Later, Kozyrev old me he had read them all and was moved. Mark up one for personal diplomacy and for intellectual openness.

Q: Were there others noteworthy?

WOLF: This kind of face-to-face discussion was invaluable. I recall visiting India -- actually he was the Additional Secretary so Bolton's counterpart, but I did the annual dialogue. I was struck by how comprehensive his knowledge was of almost *everything* that *ever* happened in the UN system. And he had maybe six people who worked for him….but international organizations were his career track -- unlike most U.S. FSO's -- and certainly me. I had a big, briefing book with papers on all kinds of issues; he had all that stuff catalogued in his brain's gray cells. And he wasn't shy (India's diplomats never are) telling me "But you all tried that 10 years ago, it didn't work." He knew the history of the issues. And I was struck by how shrewd -- in a positive sense -- how wise and shrewd -- people like him were. They were really, really good.

I had the same experience a decade later when I was in the Middle East for a few months in 2003. I went to the house of Saeb Erekat. Talking with him is like stepping into a giant knowledge room -- he can talk the history and text of every resolution and every U.S. negotiator, and there have been a lot of U.S. negotiators. Erekat has known them all and he has kept every piece of paper that's ever been drafted. They're all in a file room just off of his office.

It was the same when I dealt in NP with Liu Jieyi who was the additional secretary for arms control in the Chinese Foreign Ministry. He's now China's UN ambassador. He was permanent representative for a long time before that in Geneva where he dealt with all the arms control issues. These people are enormously impressive. Working with them, creating productive relationships, was the intellectual challenge and excitement of our work, and key to moving U.S. foreign policy forward on this or that issue. Preparing for such talks, and the talks themselves, were the fun part of that assignment, and they contributed to our international security. I don't think the importance of the UN is adequately reflected in FS assignments, nor are such assignments generally prized by FSO's. I believe that is unfortunate.

Q: Is our system hampered by the turnover by the Foreign Service people going into IO positions? The career enhancing apart, you're comparing with people who have knowledge, knowledge that goes back, you know, for years and years.

WOLF: Well, it's certainly true that other countries people get into their UN organizations and they are there for years, even decades. After Kozyrev got his PhD at the University of Moscow, he joined the Soviet Foreign Service and went straight into the International Organizations Department. While he may have had some tours outside the International Organization Department, he kept coming back and moving up the structure. I think that was true of Liu Jieyi as well, that he had been doing arms control since he was a much younger graduate of (I believe) the Beijing Foreign Studies University.

We don't have a career path that specifically prepares people adequately for multilateral activities and, and we probably should. I'm sure my first tour in IO probably helped me in my second tour in IO, because I spent two years as a pretty young cub doing a wide variety of things. It all comes back to the assignment process. Is there content in the job? After one serves in that position can an officer get selected for a good, challenging onward assignment, and what is the impact on promotions? I don't think our service has given enough credence to multilateral experience as a promotable experience. In the military, to rise above a certain level, every officer needs to have a joint assignment

I talked earlier about my concern that too many FSO's still have a sense that it's the FS responsibility (actually they think "right") to lead. But, in career terms, assignments tend to reward specific area expertise…and for many assignments; other experiences may qualify an officer for area assignments.

Q: Well, Kissinger's GLOP (Global Outlook Program) wasn't a great success, was it?

WOLF: No.

Q: No.

WOLF: No, because, because it was imposed from the top.

Q: I see.

WOLF: And imposing it from the top didn't change the promotion system; it simply changed the assignment system in an artificial way. So everybody went and did their excursion tour and then returned to course. It was like you steered around a log that was out there in the middle.

Interfunctional and multilateral experiences are neither prized for promotions nor as a basis for onward assignments. Jumping ahead in the story, in NP, we went from two Foreign Service officers to I think 20 Foreign Service officers in the bureau. And we did it because we created a culture that welcomed FSO's. Whenever I traveled, my staff would get me names of one or two bright junior officers at posts. I would meet them, tell them about NP, and if they were interested help get them NP jobs. And we put in place a process then to help them get onward assignments. Mark Fitzpatrick and Joe Pritchard led the effort.

Q: I think it varies a lot in terms of looking ahead, recruiting, helping people move onward.

WOLF: Clearly we have very talented people taking multilateral jobs -- Molly Williamson in UNP, and Jim Cunningham, and Danny Russel who were at USUN when I was in IO.

Q: Tom Niles.

WOLF: Tom Niles, you know, T.R. Pickering, all those people are people who had at least one or several UN assignments, UN-related assignments. And they've done pretty well.

Q: You mentioned IO/UNP's role focus on Security Council. Did it not do much with UNGA?

WOLF: Yes -- with several of the committees like First Committee, which dealt with disarmament issues -- it was pretty political. But the UNGA wasn't fertile grounds for the US; it was ideologically split between G-77 (developing countries) and developed countries. And, even after the Cold War was ending, many of the delegations continued the myth of non-alignment, which meant generally opposition to the U.S. It played out in many ways, both on substance and for instance budgets…and most consistently in opposition to Israel and its policies. I wouldn't want to say "blame" was one sided; we

had our own blind spots, and I think there were many in Washington who believed the old saw that "when others are critical they're politicizing the UN; when we are critical it's a question of principle."

Q: Are the problems with the UNGA, is that the primary fodder for critics of the U.S. role in the UN, or the role of the UN in --

WOLF: In the Security Council, we have a blocking veto, as do Russia, China, the UK and France. The P-5 can be a productive channel to get action, and on many critical issues is that channel. In the UNGA, or organizations like the UN Human Rights Commission, it's difficult to manage negotiations (tho' hardheaded engagement often beats sitting on the sidelines complaining), but too often too many of the results I suppose were feckless expressions of one side's views. In other specialized agencies like the IAEA, the Board of Governors (executive council), which meets more regularly than the General Conference, can be more responsive. Periodic meetings of the parties to the NPT (Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons) tend to be talkfests.

Q: What would you say to critics of the U.S.'s involvement with the UN?

WOLF: They'd ignore a whole lot of history -- positive U.S. involvement not only in support of peace and security, but also in terms of the works of the specialized agencies and programs. If the world didn't have a UN system, it would reinvent a way to assure that countries like the U.S. were successfully engaged and to manage issues like health and transportation. On the flip side, though, we have to recognize that multilateral doesn't mean "condominium" -- where our views necessarily prevail.

Q: Create a new one.

WOLF: We wouldn't get nearly as favorable a deal as we have with this one.

Q: There needs to be a universal forum.

WOLF: There needs to be a place where small countries can turn. As I said, Malaysia, when they were on the Security Council, saw united UNSC action vs. Iraq as the UN protecting the rights (the existence) of small countries. They might have been thinking about a closer in neighbor, or several closer neighbors, not the U.S.

The UN system, the UN structures, and the resolutions and all, are part and parcel of their national policies. The whole idea of world community is that disputes can be peacefully resolved, and common effort can generate common benefit. It's a mistake to see multilateralism as a zero sum game. Could an academic today envision a better structure? Perhaps, but as with the U.S. Constitution, despite all the criticisms, I cannot imagine e.g., 55 people in Philadelphia for a summer and expecting they'd find a more workable architecture for the United States. Similarly with the UN.

Q: Right about that.

WOLF: So, we should realize that, if we work at it, we can get things done through the UN and its organizations that we'd not be able to do unilaterally.

Q: Exactly. Anything else you want to add --

WOLF: Nope, that's about it for the UN.

Q: I did want to go back briefly to your time working for Mike Armacost. There was a -- some issues regarding a special prosecutor with Armacost. Did that affect your role at all?

WOLF: No, P was tangentially -- I think when there are investigations by special prosecutors, they tend to use a large vacuum to pull in every conceivable piece of paper to help find clues. This wasn't about Mike Armacost, or me…but they did ask for my calendars and notes. And the experience did shape my future note taking habits. Previously, I used to write down everything, albeit my handwriting was so bad even I had trouble deciphering it -- even NSA wouldn't have had a prayer. I wrote down less, but there was probably an efficiency loss 'cause, when there is a lot going on, and many balls in the air, one still is accountable.

Q: What was the issue basically? I don't know what --

WOLF: It may have been Iran Contra, or some controversial arms deal.

Q: But he came out all right.

WOLF: Yes.

Q: So. Well, let's move on. 19 --

WOLF: '92?

Q: You're off to Malaysia.

WOLF: Right.

Q: As ambassador.

WOLF: Yes.

Q: How did that appointment come about and then we'll move on to --

WOLF: I was one of several candidates vying for the job. The East Asia Bureau had a preferred candidate (not me), but I did have support from several members of the D Committee, including U/S Kimmitt. There are both formal channels and the informal

channels that impact assignments including for ambassadorships. In this case, I became the Department's candidate, and in due course the President (Bush -- 41) made the nomination. (There is a bit of "live by the sword, die by the sword", since in 1999 I lost out for another ambassadorship to someone who was the White House's preferred candidate (I was State's recommendation).

WOLF: Malaysia has traditionally been a career assignment. And, certainly in 1992, there was no WH competitor -- we had a scratchy at best relationship between official Washington and Kuala Lumpur and the country was largely overlooked by Washington and business elites. I'm glad I got the job (and things improved across the board), because after the fact I can say it was a super assignment! Once nominated, I went into the queue at the Senate. And, as I recall, my hearing was in very late July, maybe even early August. There were three nominees -- all of us going to ASEAN countries. One, Jon Huntsman Jr. nominated to Singapore, and Don Ensenat, nominated to Brunei. Both of them were non-career nominees. Our hearing was in front of a panel chaired by Senator Sarbanes (MD). For me, it was mostly ritualistic -- a few questions. Virtually all the questions were addressed to Messrs Huntsman and Ensenat, including about their qualifications, their political contributions and the like.

I recall Senator Sarbanes asked me (as he had Jon Huntsman) when I first wanted to be an ambassador. I recall replying that he probably wanted a shorter answer than my recounting events from 1970…he smiled. In any event, I was confirmed and we arrived in Malaysia in early September, Mahela, my daughter, Sarah, and son, Stephen.

As I say, we arrived at a time when U.S. relations with Malaysia were strained (that was more a reflection of attitudes in KL; Washington's approach was more cavalier disregard). In the early 1990s, Southeast Asia was essentially uncharted territory in terms of the politics of the United States and its foreign policy. Post Vietnam, it rarely rose to the level of undersecretaries or above. Such attention as there was went to Singapore, where there were economic and pol/mil interests, Indonesia, by far the largest ASEAN country, and Thailand, a treaty ally (but not one that commanded much attention).

I remember at the time of the 1992 election somebody asking me whether I thought post-election there would be a new policy to Southeast Asia. My reply is that probably they should hope "no." Because attention would mean that the area had developed problems much bigger than any then existing. Washington, I explained, tends to focus on problems, rarely on opportunities." Kissinger once said (speaking of neglecting Africa), "in Washington the urgent crowds out the important."

And so it was with Southeast Asia. It was a region with 500 or 600 million people, considerable U.S. investment, large quantities of natural resources, a significant number of highly capable workers, and many people who had a U.S. education….lots of opportunities; relatively few problems. Certainly, when I had a short bridge assignment in EAP/Regional Affairs before I went out to Australia in 1971, Southeast Asia was at the forefront of U.S. concerns -- the wars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, concern about the fall of SE Asian dominoes...

During the fifteen plus years after we withdrew, ASEAN developed some momentum, though it really was still on training wheels in 1992. They had started with very informal contacts, gatherings of officials with plenty of time to play golf, meet, and talk. Over time the structure gelled. While there were few really innovative programs of cooperation or collaboration, ASEAN became, as I described it, a kind of "rubber wall" around the original six countries. They continued to have a variety of tensions -- border disputes, trade disputes, immigration problems, etc. But the structure of ASEAN created a framework that kept the countries from flying apart. Our benign neglect probably helped them -- we worked in the background to keep the ASEAN pot from boiling too fast.

The big issue vis a vis Malaysia when I went there in 1992 was PM Mahathir's proposed East Asian Economic Caucus -- a new forum that would have bridged between ASEAN, Japan, Korea and China -- but pointedly without the U.S. Officials, including Secretary Baker, were apoplectic over this concept, which they saw as drawing an unacceptable line down across the Pacific. Mahathir took criticism from Washington extremely personally, and his vexation reflected itself in testy interactions all across the official relationship. There were a number of colorful vignettes that were replayed to me continually (but not for this oral history). And it was all a bit perplexing, because few of the other Asian countries (including China) would have wanted the U.S. not to be actively engaged in the region. We were a large (often the largest) investor in several countries; trade ties with most were large and growing; several were treaty partners; and I believe China saw our presence as a necessary check on Japan (which in the 1980's had been growing very rapidly).

In Kuala Lumpur, I found the embassy was basically on idle, with some exceptions (e.g., a special drug interdiction plan). We had a big canvas on which to paint, but mostly it was blank. Certainly, with EAEC, we had a problem. There were others, including a decision in Washington to cut off International Military Education and Training (IMET) money -- to penalize Malaysia's armed forces for "pushing off" the boats of Vietnamese boat people. There was considerable U.S. investment, especially in semi-conductor manufacturing (largely in Penang), and in oil and gas exploration and production -- with Exxon the biggest of the U.S. investors.

Before departing for Malaysia I had made the rounds of the U.S. business community telling them proudly "My assistant secretary wants me to go out there and be your problem solver." One guy nearly recoiled off his chair telling me "That's the trouble with you people in government; you're always looking for problems to solve. And when you don't have problems to solve you create them! Look for opportunities, and use them to make things happen. And if you don't have 'em, find 'em." For me that was a lasting epiphany.

And I have used that line a million times since, including at both of my children's weddings and every other family wedding, saying find a positive agenda and work it. What I came to realize is that the topography of opportunities dwarfs that of problems – Quite often that moving on opportunities either a) makes things that seemed like big

issues seem not so important, or b) gives you some leverage to work on the things that are problems. And that was my approach in KL. That was the embassy's approach. I started from day one to get the embassy thinking on that line. Colin Powell writes that leaders should have a strategic vision, they should live it, and they should make sure that everybody on the team internalizes that vision and mission.

I had said at my swearing in that in our relations with Southeast Asia:

"More can and should be done. ASEAN can play an increasingly important role in the world's scene and Malaysia's bound to be a center, central part. Too few people on this side of Pacific yet recognize the dynamism of ASEAN's and Malaysia's potential, and too many Americans focus only on Americans, on U.S. problems in Asia, rather than reach out to cease the opportunities. And I believe people on the other side of the Pacific too often accept as the real America the glitz and superficiality they see on TV or read in trendy magazines. I recall that when I took the Foreign Service exam, I was asked how would I respond if somebody said to me America has no culture of its own. Back then, I thought the question a bit foolish. But experience has shown that such perceptions are in fact an issue. And my challenge and that of my colleagues in southeast Asia must be to do more to show in Asia, that there is a "here," here in America, and that it's reflected in our art and our architecture, in our innovativeness, our entrepreneurship, in our constitution, our system of governance, and our sense of fair play, and indeed of our idealism. And it's this and much more that makes the United States a nation worthy of being a friend and uniquely capable of being a world leader."

Some might call that last line arrogant, but that was my mantra throughout my tour in Kuala Lumpur, to demonstrate with real deeds that Malaysia had a worthy friend in the United States, and that there could be unique advantages to a strong relationship with the U.S. I found ways to work the "worthy to be a friend…" line into almost every meeting I had at the embassy that first year. I edited a bit when I spoke around Malaysia, but the thought was always the same -- tailored for Malaysians' hypersensitivity. I wanted everyone at Embassy KL to believe in the mission, and to think innovatively how we would create new opportunities that demonstrated the worth of a strengthened partnership.

But, first thing, we needed to turn off (at least turn down the volume) on discussion about EAEC. I simply refused to be drawn into discussions at any level -- and Washington got the message -- it stopped reacting to every press release. I knew that if our friends in the region were given an opportunity, Singapore and Korea and Japan weren't going to create a political structure that excluded the United States. But if we spoke up, and provoked East Asian nationalists, our friends would be inclined to stay quiet. I didn't want to give EAEC zealots a target, so I didn't talk about it. I didn't want anybody in the embassy talking about it, and frankly I didn't want Washington to talk about it either. Fortunately, too, after the 1992 election, Washington's slate was in essence wiped clean with a new administration. The Mahathir-Jim Baker feud, if it was such, became OBE. And the Malaysian business community also weighed in on Mahathir to cool the rhetoric and give the new administration some space.

That done, we needed to show our cards…and we had a great hand. There was in 1992 over $10 billion in U.S. investment in Malaysia; companies like Intel, Motorola and Texas Instruments, Hewlett-Packard, and National Semiconductor all had major IT operations. In due course they were joined by Dell, Seagate and other manufactures, and FedEx would develop a major Asian hub. I mentioned Exxon, which not only produced significant oil for export, but also served as a training platform and mentor for many oil technicians and executives who subsequently moved to Malaysia's state oil company.

But our footprint was quite narrow in comparison to the possibilities. I wanted us to attract business leaders to Malaysia who could demonstrate America's innovative and entrepreneurial drive. This was a play on Mahathir's signature effort for Malaysia, his Vision 2020 (by the year, 2020 Malaysia would be a fully industrialized country). Malaysia had some strong economic pillars on which to build: IT, their palm oil production, and gas and oil production. They were using the resources that flowed from those sectors to transform the country, with huge investments in transportation, real estate and a number of flagship sectors and companies.

My candidates to showcase America's strengths were George Shultz, who had returned to Bechtel after being Secretary, and Jack Welch, CEO at GE. The inducement for Bechtel was a pending new airport the Malaysians were planning outside KL -- there were no U.S. bidders for any of this $4 billion project. And there were countless other infrastructure opportunities that Bechtel might pursue, if they established a foothold. So I hammered on Bechtel and Shultz to come make a pitch and *get in the game*.

Similarly with Welch and GE -- he was then one of the most storied CEO's in the world. Malaysia was just launching a new independent, electricity-generating sector, and that was a core interest for GE. But in this sector too there was little U.S. interest.

A large part of the problem for American business was a perception that Malaysia was at best a niche market, one that could be serviced from elsewhere in the region. There were concerns that crony capitalism would put them at risk under the Foreign Corrupt Practices act. They tended to market in Malaysia from offices elsewhere in the region, or from Hong Kong. They'd fly in for a short visit hoping they could get a contract signed and be gone (on the afternoon's plane). They rarely lingered, and their CEO's almost never stopped in Malaysia, even if they were in the region.

I had a really talented, and very Southeast Asia experienced commercial counselor, Paul Walters, who had served twice already in Malaysia (in the Peace Corps and as a junior FSO). He was shrewd, had business savvy, and had a wide network of contacts, including many senior Malaysian business people. Together, we set out to publicize the opportunities the Malaysian marketplace had for people who would take time to develop ties.

Shultz came early on, I believe during my first year there. Bechtel was interested in the airport project, but had done little groundwork. I told the Shultz team when they visited

"You cannot do this from Singapore. You can't do this from San Francisco. You have to have an office here…you're either in or you'll never get back in (they'd closed an office in KL in the late 1980's)." They took the plunge and brought a really experienced guy from London where he had worked on their Canary Wharf project. Bechtel in the end did not get the airport contract management contract; I believe they did get something smaller. But their new office in KL gave them a platform to pursue other work and it worked out.

And GE? They bid on the first independent power project, and thought they had won it. Jack Welch flew out for the contract signing, but just before his plane landed (literally just before), GE got word that the contract would go to Siemens. (GE cried foul, and may have had reason to do so). Welch was steaming mad, but went through with the visit. In the end, they came back for a second try, another fast-tracked power project, and they lost that bid too. They reasoned that the only way to accomplish the terms would be to bring in an outside engineering firm (from Singapore). It didn't take rocket science for us to know that decision torpedoed their chances, but again the GE working levels complained -- saying the system was stacked against them. And they repeated these charges all the way back to very senior officers operating out of the GE headquarters in Connecticut. Those reports concerned me since if I was hearing of it I knew Malaysians were too. I precipitated a mini- crisis, warning GE that their unfounded charges (re the second contract) hurt not only GE's credibility, but mine as ambassador -- since I had so publicly embraced them as emblematic of America's best. At first, some retorted that GE operated all around the world and knew far better than the Embassy how to pursue business. But after some further discussion I had with very senior levels, GE backed off. They established an office and worked closely with the Embassy on a third try, and it was successful. That success led GE to pursue much more business and in years to come that led to success for divisions like health care, transportation, and GE Capital.

The key in both these cases was that the companies established themselves in the marketplace, got to know people, and built relationships. We worked really closely with both firms (and many others). Fairly rapidly, U.S. engagement in the Malaysian economy expanded considerably. It was interesting for me engaging with Welch. Periodically, I'd fax him short notes, maybe just an article that I'd clipped from the papers. Not every time, but often the next morning, I'd get a short note back, usually handwritten in the margins. I thought to myself, "Gee, if I could just get the State Department to respond to my messages as quickly (or enthusiastically)…"

With the help of Walters and one of my junior econ officers, Dan Geisler, we fashioned five business principles that we used with literally every businessperson who called at the embassy…
1) Face-to-face beats fax to fax -- Malaysians put great stock in personal relationships;
2) Price, quality, and timing matter; Malaysia had money and options to buy from many providers;
3) One can't just sell (a product/service); one needs to create a value added relationship. Malaysia's pursuit of Vision 2020 meant it looked at every big contract as a way to get value beyond the product or service in question -- they wanted to build local capabilities.

4) CEO's talk to CEO's; this was important -- starting with the PM, there was a sense that Americans took Malaysia for granted, and they demanded to be treated with respect -- indeed wooed…other countries did, and we paid a price in the marketplace; and
5) One needs to be fast to get to the marketplace, but success requires patience -- the metaphor of drinking three cups to tea -- taking time to build a relationship had deep meaning in Malaysia. Americans were reputed to fly in with order book open, hoping to pitch, negotiate and sign a deal -- so that they could fly on/back to Singapore or Hong Kong. That didn't work in Malaysia; I suspect it didn't work in heartland America either.

As I described, we put great stock in attracting visible, senior officials and businesspersons to Malaysia. Not only was this a path to increasing economic activity (exports and investment), but it was also a way to demonstrate to Malaysians tangible demonstrations of American exceptionalism (a term we never used with fickle Malaysians; but one we wanted to demonstrate in tangible ways).

I mentioned Jack Welch. For me, hosting former Secretary Shultz also was very special. Whenever I had high-level guests I'd host lunch or dinner at the residence, and invariably could turn out a true A-list guest list. We'd keep the group to 20-24 to allow real interaction. With George Shultz for lunch, I was sitting at the table, and when I introduced him to the group, I got a momentary lump in my throat. I had spent nearly six years working for him, including when I was in T ten years, and I recall a number of times when I'd sit as a resource person behind him at Congressional hearings -- always behind his very large shoulders (I don't recall that he ever needed our help at hearings), but in KL, I was face-to-face, and that was thrilling. He was at *my* table and I was the host. That was cool.

Dr. Kissinger also visited KL at least once, and I recall I offered to host him at the Embassy during an interlude in his schedule. The DCM was out of town, and we offered her office as a place where he could work. When I brought him up to the office, there were dozens of people there "who just happened at that moment to have business in the executive office. When he walked in, he gave a big smile and in his gravelly voice (which I won't imitate) said hello then asked, "Did anybody here ever work for me?" And being the only one I raised my hand; nobody else had. He looked around and with a twinkle in his eye he said, "Good, I have nobody I have to apologize to."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: I hosted dinner for him. At the residence, SOP was to take photos in front of an iconic painting portraying Babe Ruth hitting his 60th home-run. For me, the painting was inspiration and a metaphor for our mission in KL. With Dr. K, we took a number of shots, including one of him with my daughter; we still have that one.

After a slow start, we got the queue of visitors to ramp up. Our first visitor was Ohio Governor Voinovich -- a really effective leader, an articulate proponent for educational reform, and a personification of someone steeped in good governance. Another early visitor was the CINCPAC Commander Admiral Chuck Larson. During his tenure, Larson

was a tireless ally of ambassadors across the region, and a proponent for closer ties between the U.S. and Southeast Asia. He understood the value of a buoyant diplomatic effort as part of a robust national security strategy and, at a time when State resources were scanty, he dedicated PACCOM resources to help the effort.

Secretary Ron Brown (Commerce) came over from an APEC meeting in Indonesia. I had seen him in Washington, and Paul Walters and I had sent repeated messages about the boost he could give our efforts (I believe he said at one meeting of the AMCHAM that he came if only to stop the avalanche of entreaties to visit). Anyway, I was a bit wary in advance, since we spent as much time advocating for U.S. investment in Malaysia as we did for exports to Malaysia. I wasn't sure whether, with a new Democratic administration, that was kosher. Brown settled that point in the first para of his speech to AMCHAM -- noting that exports follow investments, and American firms had to go where the competition was.

We also worked hard to get congressional visits (CODELS). Part of the lure was economic motivation -- (they'd talk up their visit and Malaysian opportunities with their constituents). Part of it though was as an antidote to misimpressions about Malaysian political fickleness. I mentioned earlier Congressional pressure for the Administration to react to the military's pushing off of Vietnamese refugees' boats…and the point I made to members was that it was ironic that we chose to punish the most docile military in Asia for adhering to the elected government's instructions -- usually one would sanction them for disregarding orders. And we also wanted our legislators to understand the incredible transformation that was underway in Malaysia from poor, commodity based country to modern, industrializing economy -- with all that portended for improved living standards, narrowing of income disparity, increased literacy and, importantly, how instructive it was that this could happen in a country as racial divided as Malaysia was, between ethnic Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Malaysia was not nirvana and had problems, but it was making credible efforts on many fronts.

Senator Bill Cohen from Maine came early, with a small group of senators. He was attracted at first to Malaysia since Penang was the largest destination for exports from Maine -- wafer fabs (microcircuits) fabricated in Maine that were packaged in Penang by National Semiconductor. Senator Cohen came several times and during the process made good friends with Malaysia's then finance minister and deputy PM, Anwar Ibrahim. The two loved to exchange verses from T.S. Elliott. I got a little bit lost, even though I was an English major.

Senator Kit Bond (from Missouri) was a frequent visitor -- and helped us pitch the sale of McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 fighter aircraft. One of the most intellectually powerful CODELS included Senators Nunn (GA), Simpson (WY) and Glenn (Ohio) plus a couple others. Mahathir loved them -- especially Glenn (the PM was fascinated with space flight). All these visits were part and parcel of our effort to create opportunities, build relationships and demonstrate the potential of an improved U.S. -- Malaysian partnership.

And these ties didn't hurt either when partisan politics threatened the relationship. In one case, the USTR (Mickey Kantor) was actively working at the behest of U.S. organized labor to suspend Malaysia's General System of Tariff eligibility. The AFL-CIO argued that Malaysia's refusal to allow a national union in the electronics industry -- which they said was threatening America's IT industry -- was a violation of international labor norms, and justified withdrawal of GSP privileges. While admittedly freedom to organize was "a" norm, the GSP legislation said suspension was justified only if a country wasn't "making progress toward" agreed international norms, and by almost any criteria Malaysia's economic and social progress met those criteria. The State Department (U/S Joan Spero) supported our effort, but we were losing ground until Senator Cohen intervened via the Senate. He rounded up 43 of his colleagues and wrote the president in support of maintaining Malaysian GSP eligibility. While USTR was inclined to dismiss the letter, I understand the National Security Adviser (Sandy Berger) took one look at the number of signatures, and decided this wasn't a fight the administration wanted to continue. Relationships matter.

Our search for opportunities had one other major component. For perhaps a decade, Malaysia had indicated interest in purchasing a new generation of fighter aircraft. Part of the rationale certainly was keeping up with Singapore's rapidly modernizing military (though there was little sense the two would ever resort to that level of hostility). But, also, Malaysia's economic security depended on expanding their considerable offshore oil and gas resources, and there were others (including China) with competing territorial claims. Finally, there was the question of the safety of navigation through the Strait of Malacca.

American manufacturers (General Dynamic which was marketing the F-16; and McDonnell Douglas that was marketing the F/A-18) saw little likelihood of a sale, and scheduled only routine visits from regional sales people. The Russians and French were much more aggressive. At the embassy in late 1993, we saw more and more concrete indications that Malaysia was about to purchase MIGs from Russia. They rolled out the red carpet for visiting Malaysian officials, and they had a constant parade of marketers offering highly attractive terms to Malaysia (including a barter arrangement potentially for palm oil).

A major Russian arms sale to Malaysia wasn't something I wanted to leave uncontested, so, in December, when I heard there would be USN carrier transit through the Strait of Malacca, I used our ties to CINCPAC to request an at-sea visit as part of a way to bootstrap a U.S. aircraft sale. Carrier visits are one of an Ambassador's great perks -- our Navy does it right. With opportunity in hand, I invited the Defense Minister to join us for a day on the Kitty Hawk. We flew out in one of those tiny propeller planes, landed (carrier landings are almost like crash landings), and stepped out to a line of sailors and twilling whistles. I have a picture in my office of me, with flight helmet and life vest moving through the line of saluting sailors. Same for Najib…and the day was just starting.

The ship put on a great "air superiority" display and took us all over the ship. While we had a bevy of senior officers to brief and escort us, the most significant briefings came from the pilots and various enlisted personnel who maneuvered the planes on deck and maintained them. It was amazing to me (and to Najib) to see these 19 and 20-year-old kids responsible for this sophisticated, and expensive, hardware. One of them explained they could change either of the F/A 18 engines simply by rolling a dolly underneath, undoing three bolts, unplugging the engine and lowering away -- then reverse the process to install a replacement. They pointed out the engine would then go below deck for reworking, and that each had an engine life measured in several thousands of hours. They compared that to the MIG, where apparently one had to disassemble the plane to replace the engine (hours vs. minutes), and then essentially toss out the engine away since it had such a short engine life.

At day's end after air show, tour, and a great lunch, we got back in that very small plane, lined up on the catapult (facing to the rear) and were shot off into space -- I can still see the Defense Minister, arms out and eyes slightly bulged as we rocketed down forward -- and I was probably the same. While those planes are noisy, I took advantage of the hour flying back to ask Najib his views, and to see if he was interested in purchasing from us. He explained to me that indeed Malaysia was intent on buying a plane, but they were not paying much attention to the Americans because America wasn't paying much attention to them. He said it takes a lot more than a salesman stopping in from Singapore from time to time. I asked him "OK, will you give us some time to make a serious offer?" "Yes. We'll give you six weeks?" That would be December into mid-January. He emphasized the importance of price, availability of weapons, and offsets.

Q: Spare parts?

WOLF: Spare -- whatever. There were four or five things but the big ones were price, weapons releasability, and offsets…plus I suppose delivery time.

When I got home that evening I discovered how useful it was to have the first name "Ambassador," 'cause I immediately picked up the phone to make several calls. The first was to John McDonnell (CEO McDonnell Douglas) whom I'd met that fall when he was in Malaysia marketing his MD-11 civilian aircraft. McD was making a serious sales effort for the MD-11 and had engaged Stanford Research Institute to help identify areas for a strategic partnership with Malaysia ("can't just sell a piece of metal; you need to sell a relationship.") The Malaysians were really pleased that McDonnell-Douglas was looking at them as a serious partner. So I picked up the phone and called John McDonnell (*at home* I think). We talked awhile, he asked a number of questions to gauge Malaysia's seriousness, and committed right then -- "We're on it; I'll have my top guy take charge" (Tom Gunn who headed McD's strategic planning, a guy with a no-nonsense, Larry Eagleburger type personality)."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: McDonnell Douglas catapulted forward, empowering a team in Singapore, dispatching someone to set up an office in KL and, importantly, energizing Navy IPO, the part of the Pentagon responsible for Navy foreign military sales. We'll come back to that in a minute.

My next call was to Gordon England who at the time headed General Dynamics. I went through the same shtick. He replied that they'd be interested, but confessed GD and Lockheed were in the process of merging, and it would be difficult to give the project high-level impetus, but he'd see what could be done. Frankly, while GD mounted a bid by late January, it never had the sense of personal importance that John McDonnell infused in McD's effort. In time, that led to problems.

My third call was to Lt. General Phil Gast, head of the Defense Security Assistance Agency, which oversees all FMS sales, and someone whom I knew from an earlier assignment. He was gung-ho for the opportunity, and committed to being helpful on some of the issues like timing and weapons releasability (although there were many players on that issue).

Shortly after New Years, McDonnell and Rear Admiral Jack Snyder (who headed Navy IPO air sales) came to Malaysia to pitch the F/A-18 sale. The three of us called on Defense Minister Najib. It was a show -- the three of us (at least Snyder and I) talking with our hand -- the way an airplane goes this way and that way (I obviously was improvising). It was sort of like a tag team match, with each of us at times finishing another's statement. All in all, it was a really successful presentation -- one about which John McDonnell stills talks. McD had come armed with P&A price and availability, and an initial offer on weapons releasibility and offsets…and most importantly, it was the CEO of McDonnell Douglas making the pitch. In due course, reps from General Dynamics' Singapore office made a pitch, but it was not as effective. In the early spring, the defense minister told me that, that they had short-listed the F/A-18 and MiG-29. The F-16 was eliminated -- he said because the plane had only one engine, which was less desirable for over-the-water missions. The reps from General Dynamics, based on their contacts in the Malaysian air force, believed they still had a chance, and kept hectoring to get on the short-list. Based, however, on the defense minister's decision, the Embassy lined up behind McD to press its case vs. the Russian alternative. The GD team was incensed and pressured us to be more even handed. They complained in Washington, and in the aircraft industry press. Worried that this would undercut any U.S. seller, I asked to meet the CEO of Lockheed -- which by then had absorbed General Dynamics. I told him I was flying back to the United States and could reroute through Los Angeles. He offered to meet at the airport, which we did -- in a two-hour meeting, just the two of us. I explained the status of the sale and my concerns about GD reps' efforts to upstage McDonnell Douglas. He listened, asked questions and at the end said he understood -- "and if the choice was between having a "made in America" sticker, or no U.S. sale, they wouldn't stand in the way. He asked only that if Lockheed's entry was short-listed that the embassy would back both U.S. sellers -- to which I agreed. By the next day the sideline noise was gone.

The only question then was whether McDonnell-Douglas (and the Pentagon) could get all the pieces lined up. This was a complicated negotiation on actual weapons and avionics releasability, final price, and a host of technical issues. I met almost every day in my office with the McDonnell-Douglas team, often only for a few minutes. But I wanted to hear directly that they were progressing the checklist of issues. And I stayed in regular touch too with Tom Gunn (and occasionally John McDonnell) -- which helped motivate the on-the-ground team. I got a bit theatrical as time wore on. I don't remember if it was my idea, maybe somebody else's, but one day when answers were not forthcoming I trotted out a small 2x4, which I had under my chair, and tapped for emphasis. From then on, it remained housed under my chair, and occasionally for effect when I was stressed I'd pull out my little two-by-four. The team knew that at the end of the two-by-four really was my telephone and their bosses, and it worked as a motivator. Seriously, though, the team, led by a former navy aviator, worked nearly 24/7 for months. Just 363 days after we started the effort, Malaysia and McDonnell Douglas signed a Letter of Agreement for eight aircraft worth over $750 million. The Malaysians also bought some MiGs. I believe the FA-18s are still flying; but not the original squadron of MIGs.

It was a special moment several years later when I went to St. Louis to see the rollout of Malaysia's first F/A-18. There were hundreds of workers at the rear of the hangar, and after the ceremony they clustered around their plane -- the plane they had made.

People say the State Department doesn't really have stakeholders, but we do, people like those aircraft workers in St. Louis, and all over the U.S. who were involved in producing parts. And that happens every day all around the world in many different ways. I remember telling people at the embassy to take real pride that we had created an opportunity, and worked hard to realize it. That sale had impact at home, and it also helped solidify a mil-mil relationship between the U.S. and Malaysia that will last for years. The U.S. navy and Malaysia signed a logistics support arrangement to exchange parts e.g., when navy carriers are operating in the region. It added real substance to our assertion of "America, worthy to be a friend and uniquely capable of providing leadership around the world." We worked hard to advance the F/A-18 sale, but we worked just as hard for every other U.S. firm that sought support. Some were large like Boeing, but others were near start-ups that early on recognized that to be competitive they had to go out internationally and compete.

One other fun vignette from the sales effort…Malaysia annually hosts an air show on Langkawi. McDonnell Douglas got the Navy to fly in an F/A-18, and I think an MD-11 as well. They also had a unique helicopter, one able to actually do a roll (turning upside down). I got to fly in that helicopter, and at a point that we were going along Langkawi's coastline, the pilot said, "one to do a roll…" Of course I did…then he let me be hands on as we did another (think he kept hold of his controls just in case). John McDonnell has told me several times that later, when he was in the copter, he felt constrained to do the same...

I think there may have been only one "U.S." businessman whom I declined to see, but he wanted us to advocate for his employer, British Gas, and I didn't see much advantage for

us. My commercial counselor, Paul Walters was exceptionally wise, well versed in Southeast Asia, and a key member of my country team. Indeed, when the DCM and I were out of KL, I had Paul stand-in as charge.

I can't speak for now, but in the early 1990's many companies were just exploring the international marketplace, for sales or investment. The time we spent with them was value added because many American businessmen were not particularly attuned to the needs of the international marketplace. They seemed to ignore basic things, assuming perhaps that everyone would prefer an American product to something made in e.g., Europe or northeast Asia. But that didn't work against the Japanese or the British or the Germans or others who understood: face-to-face beats fax-to-fax; price and quality and timeliness actually matter. And the Malaysians could buy from anyone -- they had money. Foreign diplomats actively advocated, indeed pressured Malaysia, to advance their nations' economic interests.

Q: What about corruption issues? Did you face --

WOLF: Yes. In most cases the Foreign Corrupt Practice act was a shield for American businesses, but we had evidence that, on some contracts payments were paid under the table cost us business. Large U.S. firms had elaborate procedures to engage local agents, etc. I think the Malaysians understood what they wanted, and often their first preference was American technology. We held the top of the hill, but there were others who wanted to push us off. I wouldn't claim that it was the embassy that was the key "x" factor, but between 1992 and 1995 Malaysia went from our nineteenth, biggest trading partner to eleventh. During that period, there was more two-way trade with Malaysia than with India or with Russia or all of Eastern Europe combined. And it was a pretty small country -- only about 20 million people. But there were important opportunities there. When Americans came and competed smartly, they generally succeeded.

So I've talked eliminating irritants, creating business opportunities, and the plane sale, but there was one additional factor that helped a lot, and that was reducing PM Mahathir's angst about the U.S. My predecessor --

Q: Who was your predecessor?

WOLF: Paul Cleveland.

Q: Paul Cleveland.

WOLF: Paul had been ambassador to New Zealand, where he was treated like the "big fish in a small pond." Malaysians didn't give him that kind of deference, perhaps because U.S.- Malaysian relations were strained by issues like EAEC. I decided not to pine for meetings with Mahathir (one-on-one vs. with VIP visitors), but people would regularly ask when last/how often I saw the PM.

I acknowledged life was different from when the first US ambassador had a weekly tea with Tunku Abdul Rahman. They'd go down by the stables, talk, drink tea, whatever…but I noted times had changed. I'd say, "You know, I'm pretty certain the Prime minister knows exactly what I'm doing and, if he wants to talk, I'll be there. But he's a busy person and I'm actually pretty busy myself."

I had great access to any of Mahathir's ministers and the secretaries general (senior civil servant) in each ministry. I made it a practice generally to have an embassy counselor establish ties to additional secretaries (unlike many of my diplomatic corps counterparts). But it was important for us that the counselors have that access, and they wouldn't if I crowded them out.

I knew one thing Mahathir wanted a lot was an invitation to Washington. He hadn't been in 10 years. And I think that grated on him. So we worked on it and eventually, in 1994, he was invited. That was really cool. As is the general practice for ambassadors, I flew back for the meeting. I recall we were standing there waiting for President Clinton to come into the Oval Office, he was running late. When he came in. Sandy Berger gave him a quick briefing then to me asking if I had anything to add. I knew I had about 30 seconds -- and I'd spent most of my 20-hour flight back to Washington thinking what I could say to the President of the United States. I said something to the effect that, "Mahathir has been waiting a long time, 10 years, for this invitation. He's upset it has taken so long. He wants to have a chance to say his piece."

The president nodded as if to say, "I can do that."

And in came Mahathir. There were a gang of officials from both sides and a big press scrum. They shouted to President Clinton "So what do you think of Prime Minister Mahathir?" The President responded quickly, "Well, he just walked in the door, but I've been waiting a long time to meet him. He's done some remarkable things in Malaysia and I want to hear how he did it."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Mahathir who had a dour look before broke out in one *huge, big* smile. I remember leaning over to Stanley Roth, senior director for Asia, and telling him, "Stanley, you need to find a way to end this meeting right now; it can't get any better than this."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: But, it did. The president kept asking questions, and Mahathir gave several responses that one could see intrigued the president.

Q: The press had left by then.

WOLF: Yes. President Clinton has a unique ability to focus and create like a VPN (virtual private network) tunnel with whomever he's talking to. The two of them were in that tunnel communicating. I recall Mahathir saying, "You know, we have a lot in common." And I could see the president's eyebrows lift a bit, "Please explain." Mahathir said, "Take Vietnam. You and we have a shared interest in Vietnam's economic transformation. But, when a big country like yours says do it the way the U.S. does it, the Vietnamese freak out…they see the U.S., a big, rich, post-industrial society, and think no way we can do that...but, when a country like Malaysia makes similar points, the Vietnamese say if a matchbox country like Malaysia can do it of course we can too." The president was intrigued. Well, the 30-minute meeting went on for 45 minutes. Then they kicked everybody out and the president and PM went on together for another 15 minutes or so.

Q: Just the two of them?

WOLF: Just the two of them, tho' maybe there was a WH notetaker, but I never did get a read-out on that. For me the visit was particularly gratifying because the WH staff had been truly reluctant to invite Mahathir, who had a reputation for demagoguery (albeit invariably he did this at far-off third world fora). I think the WH staff feared he'd step out on the White House driveway, and say something that would embarrass the president. That wasn't something that could happen in Malay culture, and it didn't happen. Mahathir made a few gracious remarks to the press and departed for St. Louis.

I flew with Mahathir on an MD-11 John McDonnell had sent -- still trying. En route, the PM was up front, and I was a few rows back. Just before we were to land I thought, "I need to talk to the man briefly about the visit" (for my wrap-up cable) -- he expressed satisfaction with the visit, and asked that I relay his deep appreciation to the president, etc., etc. It had turned out then that our landing was delayed by weather. So, as we circled, I had a chance to stay with the PM for 15-20 minutes casual conversation, certainly one of the most relaxed and best conversations I had with him during my three years as ambassador. One question I remember asking him was, I said, "You've been prime minister for 10 years; at some point you're going to turn this all over. Is there anything that you regret?"

He thought a moment then replied, "You know, when I was minister of education and as prime minister, I wish I'd been able to do more to break down barriers in university between young Malays and young Chinese. They go off to university and self segregate, and it's not until they get out in the work place that they find they must work together." I thought this was pretty remarkable for somebody who had spent a career playing his Malay (bumiputera) card.

After the White House visit, the next year and a half, were for me very smooth sailing. We had completed the aircraft sale, business ties were deepening, we had an increasing flow of VIP visitors, and we had the successful WH visit, all of which put the embassy in great stead in Malaysia. The embassy too was working really well as a team -- of course I had a super DCM who made sure things stayed on course.

Q: Your DCM was Wendy --

WOLF: Scott Butcher to start with and then Wendy Chamberlin for two years. I had worked with Wendy twice previously, in P and before that in NEA (in fact she was the acting office director before I came back to NEA/RA). Wendy had a strong personality, and her enthusiasm was contagious. But she could be tough when she needed to be the disciplinarian. We divided policy oversight (I had a few things where I'd take the lead); for most of the rest Wendy was empowered (tho' she kept me up to speed). I didn't want the DCM to be just another layer, and she wasn't. Even on things where I kept the lead, though, she needed to be up to speed, because there was always a possibility that she would have to take over the next day.

Q: That's right.

WOLF: More than DCM, she was a friend and really crucial part of the front office team. We used the team approach in a variety of ways, beyond simply the country team. We had an economic team with reps from most of the sections and agencies (and reviewed a weekly "to do" list); we caucused together for the annual Mission plan; and we set up ad hoc teams as needed for specific issues.

I also had a good secretary -- you know the ambassador's secretary is key for morale all across the mission. But my special force multiplier was my wife, Mahela. She was a much, much better listener, and people felt comfortable sharing with her. Also, at the residence, it was as if she was running a small business, with a staff of five (not including driver and gardeners), people coming and going, lot of entertaining, and she was good at making it all flow smoothly.

There's a story related to that -- I came back from a visit, perhaps to Penang, and when I got to the residence there was like a deadly silence. My wife and daughter were there and, when I asked, they told me about something happening at the school. Sarah was a junior and the juniors were responsible for organizing the senior prom. Apparently, there had been telephone calls about the after-prom party, and at least some of the kids were reported to have said that they were going to bring alcohol; one or two talked about drugs. Well, alcohol, we probably didn't realize that our daughter drank, but I wasn't too concerned. Drugs though were a huge red light (Sarah wasn't part of the drug set). In Malaysia, the policy was that possession of narcotics was/is a capital offense, subject to hanging. And we knew the telephones were monitored. I could just see someone on the listening end thinking here's a chance to catch some spoiled diplomatic youngster. I got on the phone with the superintendent of the school who also just had heard the same news. After some back and forth with parents etc., the superintendent simply canceled the party, to which I said, "Great."

Right after that Sarah's date, who was a party organizer (I suppose thinking the cancellation was my decision), asked, "Sarah, what is your father doing? He's going to ruin the prom!"

And my daughter reportedly said back to him, "What is my *father* doing? What are *you* doing? If my father knows about the after prom party, *everybody* knows about the after prom party. He's the last one to know about anything!"

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Which is a message for everybody who aspires to leadership jobs, because it is true that good news gets to you with great alacrity, and bad news tends to take a long time. One needs to have channels to make sure that there are no surprises. In most instances, people came to us with issues before they became problems, but I had a super network also via the DCM and my spouse.

Q: You mentioned phone bugging.

WOLF: Yes, there was no doubt the Malaysians listened to our phone calls. But it was a two-way thing -- something we could use also to our advantage. From almost day one I used the phones back to Washington with great frequency -- and being 12 hours ahead of Washington was a great help. It meant, when I got home in the evenings, I could spend the next couple hours working contacts -- often my desk officer, or others, on whatever was the issue of the day -- or the issues we anticipated.

Somebody in Washington said, "When do you sleep?" I said, "Well, you know, I have a day job, and I can't afford to sleep when you guys are awake." But the phone not only helped me communicate with Washington; it also let me message implicitly to the Malaysians. When we were working to restore IMET, or on the aircraft deal to get the best P&A package, and during the dispute with USTR, they could hear me advocating for objectivity or a better deal. And it worked both ways -- if one of our demarches was met with skepticism, I might express exasperation or criticism in a phone call knowing that the Foreign Ministry would get the message.

Relationships are a two way street, and it helped us enormously that the government came to see us as a fair channel -- supporting Malaysia sometimes when Washington didn't have enough facts to make a good decision (in our view), and criticizing when we thought Malaysia was wrong. It was also a place where we could express concerns that a commercial transaction was being considered on an uneven playing because of undue influence either from an interested Malaysian party, or an unscrupulous, foreign competitor.

We used every tool that we could. We were concerned our public diplomacy wasn't very good; we didn't get out enough officers out to talk to and with Malaysian audiences. Wendy came up with the idea of putting public appearances directly in peoples' job descriptions -- good for diplomacy, good discipline, and a good training tool.

Being the United States ambassador provided me with an enormous opportunity to do things that could advance U.S. national interest and create value. I'm really proud of the

nearly three hundred Americans and Malaysians who teamed together to do that over three years. It was a highly productive time in every aspect. There were a lot of advances, and no real setbacks.

Q: So you felt you could operate under this sort of umbrella of general policy, take the lead and be active without clearing everything with Washington.

WOLF: Tony Motley used to say at the ambassadors' seminar, "There are two words that no ambassador should ever say. Request instructions." Continuing, he added, "What you need to do is you send a cable; send it routine and unclassified if you choose; maybe on a Wednesday saying on Friday, 'I am going to do X, Y, and Z.'" Absent instructions to the contrary, one could then proceed --- Washington was on notice.

Q: Unless otherwise instructed.

WOLF: Malaysia was rarely on Washington's policy radar, and it was really up to the mission -- to the ambassador -- to set priorities and strategy, and then assure implementation. Remember the title is Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary…and that still had meaning -- at least in the 1990's. I had a series of outstanding desk officers, and I spent a lot of time on the phone with them -- trying to assess the pulse of Washington on issues important to the embassy. We used to use daily cables -- official informals -- to set the agenda for calls or return messages. These daily reports, from Jon Aloisi and Bob Goldberg, helped us every day to refine course. Deane Hinton used to talk about how important it was to him to know he had someone on the desk in Washington who had his back -- and that's why he'd go back to actually interview candidates to be his country director. We had some experiences, in Pakistan, where the desk wouldn't represent the post's views fairly, instead interposing their own views.

I shared Deane's view that there was room for only one ambassador, and that I wanted the desk to operate as an extension of our mission effort -- leave it to others to raise objections. One vignette, when I got my diplomatic passport to go to Malaysia, I opened it to find not only that the Passport Office had misspelled my name, but also noted in the back that, "The bearer is *an* ambassador to Malaysia." When I went down to get the misspelling corrected I noted this and said "If I'm 'an' ambassador to Malaysia, who are the others?" They reissued the passport very quickly (with both mistakes corrected). There's only one U.S. ambassador.

The job comes with great privileges, like any presidential appointment, and a variety of prerogatives. But it also with enormous responsibility, responsibility for the security of one's mission, responsibility for advancing U.S. foreign policy, and responsibility for the American community who are in the country to which you are accredited. And importantly, one needs always to remember the perks aren't something personal -- they accrue to the ambassador and, when one's tour ends, so do those perks. It's the nature of the jobs.

Q: Today is December 4th, 2014. We're resuming the oral history interview with Ambassador John Wolf. And John, you're still in Malaysia and we want to talk more about that. You had mentioned, made a reference to the mayor versus the CEO. What's that about?

WOLF: That's something that I used to use when I met with participants in the ambassador seminar, the two-week orientation for ambassadors prior to their postings. Based on my KL experience, I described the job of ambassador as one part CEO (chief executive officer) of American Incorporated; you provide leadership across the American community in broad (not supervisory) terms. Certainly you are responsible for government to government relations, and vis a vis, for instance business, promoting U.S. trade and investment, and in terms of residents and visitors, protection and welfare. The other part of the job, though, was as mayor of the embassy community, and it was important for an ambassador to know the pulse and blood pressure of that community because the health, welfare, and motivation of that community will determine how well a mission does in accomplishing its foreign policy mission. The embassy relationship with e.g., an international school, is another aspect -- especially since many embassy families will have their children enrolled. The record is replete with ambassadors who focused a lot, e.g., on government to government, at the exclusion of other aspects I'd suggest are critical -- and usually those were less productive missions, missions where the whole was less than the sum of the parts.

Service abroad can be stressful, and the front office team that ignores that stress, or which increases it by the ambassador's management style, is a team that makes everyone's job harder. That doesn't mean pandering -- I remember a day or two after I first got in country, I was approached by a small delegation of the staff saying, "You've got to fight to get back our hardship deferential." Apparently there had been a five or 10 percent deferential, mostly having to do with climatic conditions. Malaysia is hot and humid, but Malaysia -- especially Kuala Lumpur -- is a pretty modern place with most of the creature comforts one could find in any American city -- and at generally lower prices. The differential was a holdover from earlier years, before KL's rocket like growth. The fight for the differential was also I saw as a proxy fight against the new FBO (Foreign Building Office) standards, which saw many families going into apartments vs. the gracious colonial style mansions that families had earlier. I did not see this as a fight we could (or should) win.

We tried to be inclusive in events Mahela and I hosted -- rotating invitations across the staff, and holding a couple mission wide functions annually (e.g., at Christmas and in the spring prior to the summer rotations). We paid a lot of attention to the school and I had a representative on the board. We also paid a lot of attention to the Marine Security Guards. They were a part of the community, the first U.S. presence visitors saw when they came to the Embassy, and they had a vital security role -- and it was important, even though the daily threat level was low, that they be prepared if/when the need would arise. The DCM and I included all the marines at meals we hosted around holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. I played sports with them. I had been an enthusiastic (and successful) softball player from my time at Princeton and in Pakistan. I was a good

hitter, mediocre fielder. So I was a bit chagrinned when the gunny (MSG detachment commander) came to me to say I wasn't going to make the team (CUT!!).

Q: You were cut!

WOLF: I was cut. That was like a dagger to the heart.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: But I made up for it. When the diplomatic league, bowling season came around (bowling -- I said KL had most western creature comforts), I turned out the first night and had an extraordinary night. My first game was like about 240 (the next one was about 180 and the next one was about 160). There was some quiet grumbling that the embassy had brought in a ringer -- but I was the U.S. ambassador. In any case, my average that night was far better than I'd ever had, and I decided to retire while I was still ahead.

One other thing, re marine readiness -- Tony Motley had suggested how important it was for detachment morale that the marines saw the ambassador as interested in their mission. They were responsible for the classified material in the embassy (they weren't, as many outsiders think, responsible for personnel security). Periodically, in consultation with the RSO, I'd stop in unannounced at Post 1 and precipitate an alert…something like "Corporal (Sgt), I just saw somebody coming over the wall. Looked like he was carrying like a machete…" I'd tell him to do everything he normally would do, but not to alert the police -- this is a drill. Once, when I did this the young marine, who had just arrived at post, hit the recall button, but then figuratively speaking hit his own panic button. When the gunny arrived a couple minutes later, pulling on his flack jacket and firing questions at the marine -- what's the situation, have you recalled the detachments, where's the ambassador…??? The marine froze. I actually was sitting discretely in the corner and the marine guard just froze trying to answer. In any event, the drill went on from there and nothing worked.

Q: But the gunny didn't know that it --

WOLF: The gunny had not known that there was to be a drill, but he took charge immediately. There was a lot the detachment did to fix problems identified in the wrap-up session immediately after. But what was more impressive was that the gunny took that young watch stander under wing, and worked intensively with him for a year -- to the point where the young corporal actually was promoted.

These drills weren't meant as a "gotcha" exercise by the ambassador. I wanted the marines always to understand there was a reason why they were in Malaysia and that, at any moment night or day, they needed to be ready to act. We had a good detachment, and while there were no real threats during my tenure, there had been the year prior during the Gulf War). And they contributed in the community…in one case rescuing a young American who was injured and had fallen into a ravine…the marines used their skills to get the youngster out safely and on to medical attention.

Going back to being the mayor -- so there were a lot of things that you did that had to do with the way in which the embassy operated. I think morale was really good. We did well on the inspection that we had. And people seemed genuinely, and sincerely, to embrace the team concept that we had.

Ten years later, Secretary Powell talked frequently about leadership. Have a strategic vision; make sure that it's internalized by everybody who is a part of your organization; ensure that they have the tools and the equipment and the training to accomplish the mission; share out the credit widely; and when something goes wrong, before you look for somebody to blame, step back and think about whether one, two, three, and four were all done successfully…because if you didn't do one, two, three, and four when you could, then you didn't have to look any further than the mirror. I did not have the benefit of CLP's advice when I was in Kuala Lumpur, but I had worked for some strong personalities whom we discussed before, people like Deane Hinton and Arnie Raphel.

Q: Seems like you also wanted to know when problems were little before they became big problems.

WOLF: Well as I said, *yes*, getting bad news is the hardest part of being at the top of the pyramid. Powell in his book writes that when people stop bringing you their problems, you have a big problem. So I took to heart my daughter's aside: "If my father knows about it, everybody knows about it. He's the last one to know about anything." Perhaps that was a bit overstated, but I also was fortunate to have a DCM and spouse whom people knew to be a direct channel to me. And we tried not to quash concerns; we tried to fix them.

Q: Did you have a Peace Corps?

WOLF: We did not have a Peace Corps. It had closed by then. As I mentioned, my commercial counselor had been in the Peace Corps in Malaysia in the 70's and still had contacts from then which were invaluable to us during my time in Malaysia.

Q: In this scratchy relationship with the Malaysians, were there particular contentious problems politically, or economically?

WOLF: It started with the East Asia Economic Caucus -- a difference in perceptions -- perhaps Malaysia's implicit intentions. But it became a personal struggle between Mahathir and Secretary Baker -- with allies in Asia mostly studiously on the sideline. After the elections, and with a new administration, when we went silent, our Asian partners quietly tabled the initiative at least for a time (though now there is an ASEAN plus three caucus that brings Asians together, without us, and until now with no adverse consequences for the U.S.).

Then there was the IMET suspension, which we reversed, and the squabble over worker rights. While we didn't ignore these problems, the path to resolution really was by

shaping new opportunities, the aircraft sale, increased trade and investment, and many more official and private visitors, attention to our public diplomacy, etc. Because the key GOM decision makers were well aware of what we were doing on the opportunity side, it made the problems a lot less vexing.

Life was never dull. There was a proliferation issue that came up and I remember my regional affairs officer and I worked intensely with Washington to monitor and then to deal the issue. It could have become a real problem. There were other dogs that didn't bark -- we had several counter-narcotics programs with Malaysia, and at a point my regional affairs director reported that DEA's people were causing problems that threatened Malaysia's cooperation not only with DEA but also with his agency. It turns out the DEA office director was about to transfer, and I told Washington that, under my Circular 175 authority (approval of assignments), I wasn't inclined to approve a new DEA presence. That was a little like throwing a stink bomb in the middle of a party, because I remember the assistant secretary for INL called me up and said, "You can't do that."

I said, "Of course I can. I have this authority. And they're screwing things up royally here." Shortly thereafter, I got a call from the head of DEA, who wanted to visit KL to sort things out with the Embassy and the national police. The Inspector General of Police agreed to the meeting and I attended -- just the three of us. At first, it was pretty uncomfortable. The DEA head tried to apologize, but the IG directed all his comments to me, cutting out DEA.

Q: Really?

WOLF: And so it was this triangular conversation through me going back and forth. But the DEA guy was good. He had been the superintendent of the NY State Police, and he kept telling police stories. Somewhere in the middle of the meeting -- policemen tend to talk to policemen -- the ice broke and they became like best buds. It ended with his assurance to the IG that, "We will fix this." Relationships matter; CEO's talk to CEO's; problem solved.

Q: They sent out somebody that was good.

WOLF: Yes. Another time we had a problem with some regional AID people out of Manila, who visited without country clearance and caused a problem we heard about from the Malaysians, not AID. We hauled them in and told AID in the Philippines we were denying country clearance to any of them until we had instituted proper coordination procedures and a written MOU.

The president sends each ambassador a letter saying "You are my chief representative…and you're responsible..." When things don't happen, one can't just throw up one's hands and call Washington saying, "Fix it," because, generally, Washington doesn't -- for most posts -- have a 24-hour service window. That did not empower me to go around picking fights. But it meant not ducking when something was

off the rails, as with DEA, or another time when an agency head came to me with some ill thought out plan that had not been properly vetted in Washington.

Most often, I was involved in problems that affected our relationship with Malaysia, but I remember one call in the middle of the night from a father who for some reason was separated from his son at immigration. His problem became mine (and then my consular duty officer's).

Q: You were an active ambassador and how would you describe your role in influencing the focus back in Washington as to what the policy would be? Presumably there'd be an umbrella policy in which you're operating, and we talked earlier about not necessarily requesting guidance but just to go ahead and do what you --

WOLF: There was an umbrella, sure, but very little Washington focus day-to-day. The usual way that we could get things done was to do them ourselves. That's why I spent a lot of time on the phone to people in and outside Washington; that's why I met personally with so many people, at the Embassy or traveling around Malaysia.

Q: Something else Tony Motley used to say was talk about -- he talked about his position on the staff standing up when the ambassador came into the room, that this was due to respect for the position, not necessarily for the individual, but it was something he insisted on. Did that ever become an issue at your post?

WOLF: *(sighs)* that wasn't a biggie for me. I was relatively young when I went to post, and I recall the first day I came into country team that not everyone leapt to their feet. They got there, but it looked like they were pulling on a very slow pulley. But I seem to recall that as we got going these things worked themselves out. As you say, it's not the individual; it is the position.

Invitations to events were another facet of this. We got a lot. It wasn't necessarily because they wanted John and Mahela Wolf (well maybe they wanted Mahela), but they wanted to have the American ambassador there. And that's a responsibility and it's a privilege. The first year we accepted almost every invitation; in years two and three we became increasingly selective.

Q: What about public diplomacy?

WOLF: I mentioned that we put a plan in place to increase our outreach. It struck the DCM and me that the upcoming generation of officers approached a Foreign Service career somewhat differently than we had when we were junior. For us, being a Foreign Service Officer was a choice of a career, something that we expected to do over a lifetime with the hope that we would succeed. It seemed by the 90's that younger officers saw the FS more as a job -- than a career -- with the idea that they might have a number of different jobs (employers). For us, that attitude was more like dipping one's toe in the water, rather than jumping into the pool.

I recall asked one economic officer about his "representation plan." He told me he was supposed to do one luncheon a quarter. When I asked him what he'd be doing the other 64 days each quarter, his eyes glazed over, and I knew I had a problem (with his motivation, with his section chief's supervision, and I owned the problem because I was the leader). That's why we instituted a speakers bureau, why we included mid-level officers in the economic group coordination meetings, and why we involved them in representational events (and made sure they didn't just cluster on the edge talking to each other and eating our food). We worked hard to get the staff just as fired up about the representing the U.S. as we were. Wendy's speakers initiative worked out -- and officers enjoyed the additional opportunities they got then to interact with Malaysians in more informal settings. And, it also helped make them better speakers.

Q: As we wrap up Malaysia, is there anything you want to add?

WOLF: Give me one quick sec -- one quick second to be sure that I've -- I think I covered all the things that I wrote down that I was going to cover. I reveled in the special opportunities I had each day as ambassador in Kuala Lumpur. I had a strong team; we made things happen; and I am satisfied that we advanced American interests, bettered the relationship, and had fun doing it. We worked hard, but there was time for fun too.. We always kept that latter point in mind -- there's a time for work, but there needs too to be time for fun and laughter. It was a terrific three years. Unfortunately it was curtailed a little early --

Q: How did that happen?

WOLF: In the dark of the night.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: *(laughs)* No, I was a victim of our success. One of the things that we had was a very good embassy mission plan. We didn't just task it to the most junior person at post; it was pulled together and edited by the DCM. Once she had a draft, I'd convene the country team for maybe a day (at the residence) to work it through, and to ensure that everyone on the country team had a say and shared ownership for the core priorities. We had gotten kudos for our mission plans and we'd had a very good inspection. So I don't know how it happened in Washington but Secretary Christopher asked me to come back in early 1995 to head a new "Strategic Management Initiative" -- in essence a plan to reengineer the Department (this was part of VP Gore's reinventing government initiatives). I still had at least six months on my ambassador clock, but one doesn't say no to the secretary of state. Actually, I was double-hatted. I headed SMI, but remained the ambassador for seven more months. I'd spend about three weeks in Washington then go back to post (and my family) for about a week per month. That got really old really fast.

Q: Why did they do it that way? Wouldn't it have made more sense just to name your successor and then let you do fulltime unless you were --

WOLF: I suppose that was one of the things that needed to be reformed. But in any event, that's the way it worked, so my family stayed in -- and I think, I think there was some degree of compassion for letting my family finish up. My daughter was a senior in high school.

Q: So you left in when?

WOLF: It was probably January or February. For SMI, I had a small team including several with whom I had worked previously. They were dragooned from around the building. But we also counted on teams including representatives from a variety of bureaus -- as I recall, they came dual-hatted, staying in their existing jobs, but working also with us on SMI. It proved plenty difficult to reform a 200 and something-year-old institution with traditions -- and it's own place in the Constitution. It was probably a bit feckless to think that John Wolf was going to change the way the State Department. In retrospect this was not one of my most successful tours. There were several reasons for that. First of all, the nature of the building, it was -- it's sort of -- it's a difficult place.

Second of all, to be honest the people doubted the Secretary's commitment to the project. As part of benchmarking how reengineering should work, I went to IBM. They had just gone through a major reengineering project. Lou Gerstner, the CEO had convened in NYC 400 IBM leaders from around the world. He stood up in front of them, no notes, and spoke for several hours about his vision of IBM going forward, then introduced the then President of IBM Japan, whom he named to head the reengineering project. "He has my full confidence and will speak for me."

I met with the guy and he told me that periodically he get into disputes with different line heads -- and when they couldn't reach agreement would suggest, "Let's talk to Lou." Apparently very few people took that course since they knew Gerstner was likely to back his reengineering head. The point was that everybody in IBM knew that Lou Gerstner was committed to restructuring IBM. While he might not ask about it on any particular day, it was always one of his three or four priorities.

That was not the case in SMI. Since Secretaries of State generally serve for only relatively short periods of time, few have been inclined to launch fundamental reforms -- it's messy, and time consuming, and requires the leader's personal attention. With other "urgent" priorities and crises, few secretaries want to take on the task, and in my view that included Warren Christopher. In another reform effort just before SMI, the top recommendation for streamlining was cut the size of the Secretary's traveling party -- but his Chief of Staff countered "why do that; Jim Baker always traveled with more than 100 people." Recommendation rejected; message of commitment to change received.

Second, the assistant secretaries were a major impediment. They didn't want outsiders (me) meddling with their bureaus, and they certainly didn't want to relinquish any resources even if they had surplus. Dick Holbrooke was a major force, and unmovable obstruction. He did not believe for a moment the Secretary would hold him accountable for restructuring, and he basically blocked us out of EUR.

The third problem was my fault. We had divided into seven clusters on issues like paper flow, communications, overseas presence etc. And each group came up with a variety of recommendations -- which we boiled down to about 40 or so. We put those as our reform agenda. I didn't have the advantage of advice I got years later from a trustee at Eisenhower Fellowships to the effect that, "you can only have five priorities, because you only have five fingers. And less is *better*." With 40 recommendations, and literally a couple hundred implementing steps, it was a bit like the monkey in the cookie jar. We tried to do too much at once, rather than doing a few things (at least at first) well and getting them done.

Q: Who made up these seven groups?

WOLF: We staffed them by asking bureaus to put forward an SMI, a person to be part of our teams.

Q: Would that be their fulltime job for a defined period of time?

WOLF: I don't think they were full-time. We had a pretty firm calendar tho' so we took up a lot of their time, but the aim wasn't to create a new reform bureaucracy. We were supposed to come up with ideas, and then work with the department as a whole to implement these things.

Q: So they came together with -- they sent the recommendations to you. Did you and your staff then --

WOLF: I had my team members on each task force. We just had too many thing on the stove, and not enough gas with which to cook. We should have found some important, low-hanging fruit to show reform was possible, then built from there. And clearly it needed to be more substantive than e.g., reducing the number of clearances that showed on memos (since that wouldn't change the clearance process behind the signature page). If we had reduced layers, that would have changed things. But we never got to a point where there was just one person empowered to clear for a bureau. SMI itself ended up being a lot of wheel spinning, a tome put somewhere on a shelf never to be read. Two years later, one never would have known where our tires had driven across the surface of the State Department.

Q: But you were the tsar --

WOLF: Not really -- everything I did had to be vetted by the Deputy Secretary, Strobe Talbott, and in the management area by U/S Richard Moose -- who opposed any interference by SMI in his management area!

Q: Did the document have to be cleared by the assistant secretaries?

WOLF: It must have had a million clearances on it.

Q: And this effort took two years?

WOLF: No, no, it was over by late summer, mercifully.

Q: So you were only there for six or seven months then.

WOLF: I think 'til fall. Eventually I told Strobe that I just need to move on; we weren't going anywhere. The whole thing was burned out.

Q: But you came up with the final product of 40 recommendations.

WOLF: Yes

Q: And that went to Strobe.

WOLF: Actually he and I drafted it over Easter weekend, and then it went on to the Secretary.

Q: And to your knowledge did any of those recommendations ever get implemented?

WOLF: Some of them got -- I guess. But as I say, two years later if you asked people what SMI was, they'd just shake their heads and roll their eyes. We didn't change the department. It was really frustrating.

Q: So by the summer of '95, '96 --

WOLF: Right, I think this may have been the fall, but yes. Strobe offered me the coordinator's job for the Asia Pacific Economic Caucus (Ambassador for APEC)

Q: This was your choice? Were you looking?

WOLF: I don't recall having a list, but this offer was out of the blue. At the time, I didn't a real patron out there advocating for my next assignment.

Strobe brought up the APEC job, and said they were going to raise it to the ambassador's level. I knew about APEC from KL days, of course, but it was still evolving, and was unknown to most Americans outside Washington. President Clinton had participated in the summits, and he believed in its lofty goal of free and open trade in the Asia Pacific by 2010 for developed countries, 2020 for developing countries. Those goals were set in 1993 by leaders meeting in a summit at Bogor, Indonesia. At the time, there were 15 "economies" participating -- economies vs. "states" since Taiwan was a member and China wouldn't have agreed if it were there as a state. (The government on Taiwan was always pushing to have its president participate in the leaders' annual leaders' meeting, but China resisted that. So Taiwan (Chinese Taipei in APEC-speak) was represented by an economic minister).

In 1995, APEC included the original six ASEAN countries, northeast Asian countries (including Hong Kong), the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, and Chile. It expanded in 1998 to include Russia, Peru, and Mexico. The focus, then, was specifically economic, although leaders obviously discussed in their two-day summit whatever they chose. But at the senior officials level (mine) and ministerial, the issues then were economic. That has changed in the years since 2001.

I enjoyed this assignment, although the constant traveling to Asia was a bit tiring -- I operated out of the East Asia Bureau as an economic DAS equivalent. During my APEC sojourn, there was the 1997 financial crisis, and I took on additional responsibilities for that in the bureau.

Annually, APEC rotated leadership among the member economies, first the Philippines then Malaysia and finally for me New Zealand. But every year I circulated around, consulting with my peers and trying to move an agenda forward. It was a bit awkward, in the case of Malaysia, coming back as the previous ambassador, more awkward I suspect for my successor than for me. So every three weeks or so I was in the region, sometimes for only a day or two, depending on substance -- in one case, during the Philippines' presidency I went to Manila for lunch with the Foreign Minister Romulo. Not sure the results of that trip justified the expense.

Q: It must have been a murderous travel schedule.

WOLF: I got a lot of frequent flier miles.

APEC was organized around three principles. One was trade liberalization; the second was "facilitation" -- things like deregulation, and promoting more trade and investment; and the third was economic and technical cooperation, the expectation that the developed countries would help developing countries with aid and technical assistance. "Eco-tech," the economic and technical cooperation, was a favorite hobbyhorse of the Chinese. They in particular thought echo-tech, including technology and resource transfers, were the key to APEC success. We had no money, so eco-tech was not one of my favorite things in and of itself. Trade liberalization I left largely to my partner from USTR, Bob Cassidy. I never really understood how we could accomplish the Bogor goals while also subscribing to a simultaneous effort to complete a new global trade round. (This was before USTR entertained regional initiatives like the Trans Pacific Partnership -- TPP). We did have one significant trade success, in the Philippines, where APEC economies agreed on a major reduction in tariffs on IT goods. It was a really big breakthrough, a demonstration that every once in a while one could do something that had a real impact in the marketplace and it was relatively easy to globalize since the Asian countries were such big players, in addition to the U.S.

It's also where I learned an important rule for talking to the press. There was a large White House press pool with the president in the Philippines, and they were largely

isolated from the meeting until after the IT announcement. By then, the press corps was bored and querulous, and surly. When Cassidy, Assistant Secretary Stanley Roth and I came out to brief, it was like throwing raw meat into a cage of hungry lion. They kept firing questions and each one of us had a slightly different answer. We were a frustrated that they didn't understand what a big breakthrough this was. We had reduced tariffs on 97% of IT products, but they kept coming back to the 3% of exceptions? I forget who the press spokesman was, perhaps Richard Boucher, who said afterwards, "Listen, you have to have a line. Before you go to the press you need to know exactly what you're going to say, *and that's all you say."* For example, if what you're going to say is the sky is blue, then you say the sky is blue. "Well, are you worried about thunderstorms this afternoon?" "No, I'm pleased the sky is blue." "But what it weren't blue…?" The thing he stressed to remember is that the press will only ask a question maybe three times (in different ways) then move on. So if one's answer is always the same, they'll finally learn and move on.

For me the heart of APEC work was the "facilitation" agenda. One of the characteristics of APEC was generally to work only by consensus, and then as a group -- all or nothing. But on facilitation, the concept was U.S. + x economies. I was able to identify issues and several (or more) countries where we could move things forward voluntarily, working with business and the interested governments.

For instance, power generation was a big problem in the Philippines, and they decided to allow private investors to build generating capacity and sell electricity to the grid. I used to describe facilitation as government passing the enabling legislation and regulations; then business investing, building the plant, training workers, and operating the facilities. But, in the end, the key question for a consumer was whether the power went on when the customer flipped the switch (in the Philippines the answer often was no). A few years, the power shortage problem was substantially mitigated.

Facilitation meant discussions between government and business on the law, the regulations and a price sufficient to allow a return on investment. We worked on this in one of the working groups.

Similarly with the large air cargo companies. I remember hosting air cargo companies to a dinner in Washington. I explained we wanted to have an APEC "small package" initiative. They told me size wasn't what was key for them; speed was the key variable, how quickly was the product needed. In Penang, companies like Dell wanted to export from Penang all across Asia, but a key impediment was delays in clearing incoming shipments of parts. I remember talking to Malaysia's minister for transport, responsible for customs who said in essence no problem -- "we've been operating two shifts; we'll add another." I explained the did not want more inspectors; they wanted a more modern inspection process, one using electronic clearance of invoices, and random sampling of shipments. In due course, that's what they got

That was something we were able to move forward in several APEC economies.

I learned a lot from these sessions with business, and we used various APEC fora to try to lubricate the wheels. By detouring around APEC's reliance on unanimity, we were able to get things done in groups of willing members and it served as an example and incentive to other economies to match the reforms.

Q: Did you -- so you lobbied businesspeople, you lobbied -- consulted with the government --

WOLF: Not "lobby", "consult."

Q: You consulted.

WOLF: I consulted and advised.

Q: On the basis of positions, the U.S. government positions, how were those positions determined? Did you have a key role in that? Was this back in --

WOLF: We had --

Q: Was this an E Bureau group or --

WOLF: Well, Joan Spiro was the leader of the pack in the State Department, but a lot of that was "creating opportunities" by my team and me. We had various working groups interagency along the same lines as the APEC working groups, for instance transportation, finance or agriculture. And we had a business advisory council that -- the business community had actually set up an APEC office, located in Seattle, that provided a forum to develop business input. (Seattle was geographically well located, and the office benefited from strong support, inter alia, from Boeing. In fact, though, the people who constituted the APEC business constituency were mostly the people who had Washington advocacy jobs). I traveled outside Washington a lot to see business executives. They had a variety of meetings. The good thing about the business community is that when they meet, they tend to meet in nice spots, and often with a golf course *(laughs).* Back to serious, one achievement I prized was being awarded the APCAC award -- that is an annual award given by the American Chambers of Commerce in the Asia-Pacific given to one government official who has advanced U.S. business interests. It was a very distinguish group who had over time received APCAC's award, and I was very honored.

Q: So that, you did APEC for three years. That takes us up 'til when, '99?

WOLF: That was up to '99 or so. And then I went into sort of a hiatus. I was supposed to go to another post, but at the last moment got bumped for somebody else whom the secretary wanted to remove from the job he was in. My consolation prize was being named special advisor to the president and secretary of state for Caspian Basin Energy. Turned out splendidly.

Q: And did you --

WOLF: What was a terrific job! It built on my business and government experience. The goal, as first set out by President Demirel of Turkey was to create an energy corridor from Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan on Turkey's southeast border with the Mediterranean (In fact Demirel envisioned extending the pipeline corridor across the Caspian to draw in Kazakhstan's oil and Turkmenistan's gas). His vision, at least the Baku-Ceyhan portion, was shared by Presidents Heydar Aliyev (Azerbaijan) and Eduard Shevardnadze (Georgia). President Clinton too was an active proponent and also shared the cross-Caspian goal. Each of the presidents had slightly differently perspectives but also shared the vision. For Turkey, the pipeline would be a way to secure its ties to its Turkic neighbors to the east, and it was adamant that it would not allow vastly increased oil traffic through the narrow and twisting Bosporus waterway that bisected Istanbul; for Azerbaijan, it was a way to get its oil out to market; for Georgia it was an external tie (balance against Russian pressure) and a source of funds. President Clinton supported all these objectives. While the U.S. said often the pipeline corridor was not in opposition to Russia (we supported for instance a major pipeline through Russia from Kazakhstan), still implicitly there was a core goal of giving the regional countries "options" by increasing their ties to the west.

Arrayed against the three Baku-Ceyhan partners were not only Russia's concerns but also profound opposition from the petroleum companies involved in Azerbaijan's oil sector. Led by BP, there were ten private and state owned companies involved, and they were, initially, unified in opposition to a pipeline to Ceyhan, which they thought too complex a negotiation and too expensive as a business proposition. They wanted to build a pipeline to Supsa, on Georgia's Black Sea cost. The western companies, e.g., BP, Exxon, Unocal, etc., all bridled at government "interference" in their business.

The complexity of the geostrategic overlay and hardened business attitudes were a challenge, but unknotting all this was fun. My job was to be to help bridge differences between the governments and business. I inherited the job from Dick Morningstar who was the U.S. first Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy (CBED) negotiator. He had facilitated discussions among the countries to get their buy-in to an overall concept. I made at least nine trips to the region over a year-fifteen month period, with my colleague in CBED, Matt Bryza. Bryza spoke fluent Russian, which was a real help in these former Soviet Republics. He had worked with Morningstar, and he had a savvy grasp of both the political and economic issues at play. Our partners on the government side were (in addition to the regular engagement with Presidents Demirel, Aliyev and Shevardnadze (plus Nazarbayev and Niyazov from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) mostly the senior energy technocrats plus, from Turkey, the MFA U/S for Economics.

Q: Who sent you?

WOLF: I suppose it was Talbott, perhaps in consultation with the WH. Ultimately, the appointment was endorsed by the president.

Q: That level?

WOLF: The president *loved* the concept. And I suspect that if you ask President Clinton, he'd probably have said it was his idea. The way this was set up, my job was called "Special Advisor to the President and to the Secretary of State for Caspian Basin Economic Diplomacy."

Q: Did you have an ambassadorial title at that point too? Or you just used --

WOLF: Outsiders tend to refer to former ambassadors as ambassador. I suppose the title went with the job. What was more important than the title was the control group, an interagency group that I co-chaired with Leon Fuerth. Leon was passionate about the pipeline. Our interagency group included Energy and Treasury and State (EB and S/NIS). Location says a lot. We met in the VP's ceremonial office, and when one is sitting there it gives the thing substantial gravitas. More importantly, every time after I traveled I wrote a memo to Sandy Berger (the president's national security adviser; cc. Fuerth) and to Secretary Albright. I can't say with knowledge that Berger passed info along to the president, but there were a number of times when memos came back to me from Berger with marginality on it. My assumption -- and that's what I told everybody -- is that, when the national security advisor takes time on an issue and writes notes, it is likely he'd brief the president on salient points. So this activity appeared to have President Clinton's personal chop on it. And that was really important in the bureaucracy in Washington, and it was hugely important when I was in the region with the three presidents. Certainly they believed, and I didn't do anything to dispel it, that what they said to me was getting back to the president. In the State Department, it was a little bit less clear. The secretary did not seem engaged, and the regional bureau and EB had support roles (including administrative support from EB). They did not have a supervisory, policy responsibility. So I had a lot of flexibility script my
"instructions" both within the interagency setting and certainly when traveling.

Q: You wrote your own instructions.

WOLF: We always discussed matters in the interagency group (at my level and the staff level); the goal was clear -- getting firm commitments from government and the energy companies for the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. Most of the discussion was tactics, and we had to adapt on the run as events proceeded. There was a parallel goal as well to get a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan across the Caspian then parallel to the oil pipeline into Turkey. It was a more difficult venture, and ultimately didn't succeed (tho' there was agreement later to build a gas pipeline from Baku into Turkey.

Q: So for the first you got what you wanted.

WOLF: Yes -- the governments had already reached general agreement. The challenge was to translate a concept they liked into binding, commercial commitments between them and the energy producers. When I first started, there was great skepticism this could

happen. Outside observers, including experts like Daniel Yergin, and think tanks like at Rice University, all saw my mission "to quote them" as "a pipe dream."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Getting three sovereign countries and ten private energy companies to agree was daunting -- indeed nothing like this ever had been done. The task was to create a binding international framework and separate host government agreements. In each round of negotiations, the companies arrived with companies of lawyers -- high priced partners plus their associates, the people who carried the polished black brief, leather briefcases. I can't imagine the number of billable hours for our discussions in a series of smoke filled discussions in conference rooms in Baku, Ankara and Istanbul. This was before a ban on indoor smoking of course, but there was a lot of symbolic smoke from the heated rhetoric -- on both sides. My wife used to make me leave my suitcase and clothes at the front door in a garbage bag.

Q: Air them out?

WOLF: No, off to the cleaners -- and this wasn't reimbursable.

I worked close shoulder to shoulder with my Turkish colleagues, from their Energy Ministry and MFA. Matt Bryza joined us in almost every session. The four of us spent weeks and weeks, probably 100 plus days together over the course of 14 or 16 months -- and during that time became great friends. Yurdakul Yigitguden and Mithat Balkan were, in addition to being great negotiators, also connoisseurs of good food, and we ate at a different restaurant, bistro, kebab bar etc., every time…with only one or two repeat visits -- and every meal -- every meal was excellent. Matt and I also were able to stay most visits at the Four Seasons Hotel, near the Hagia Sophia. Tourism in Turkey was still reeling from the global financial crisis in 1997 and the hotel had made a deal with the embassy to let Ambassador Paris there at the per diem rate, which they extended to us. The hotel was reportedly one of the best in Europe, but was just 90 dollars a night.

Q: Really?

WOLF: But also, the great advantage was that the hotel was halfway to the airport, so we could get there and back without having to go through horrendous traffic.

WOLF: But they were wonderful partners, and I found out only later (after I became president of Eisenhower Fellowship) that Yurdakul was an Eisenhower Fellow.

Q: Is that right?

WOLF: So was Suleyman Demirel.

Every time we went to Turkey, I met with Ambassador Mark Parris, and on most of the trips we'd see President Demirel. He'd have his top advisers there plus a few others, and

on our side there would be Wolf, Parris and Bryza. Demirel always started with a handful of 3x5 cards with some points he'd read; we'd listen and take notes. The Turkish sides scribbled down every word. And then we had a general conversation, and his notecards would be long gone.

I remember once he told me, "Ambassador Wolf, here's what we're going to do. We're going to get the intergovernmental agreement done in October; we'll get the host agreements done by November, and we'll start moving dirt in January." His aides were scribbling the president's dictates scrupulously, but I turned to him and said, "Sir, that's a great plan. That's January of what year?"

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: *(laughs)* His aides were aghast, but the president just laughed. We developed a great rapport, and in my EF years a decade later, he was always extraordinarily gracious to me whenever I'd visit him in Ankara. Demirel's personal engagement, and his willingness to roll up his sleeves (to press the bureaucracy in Turkey and his counterparts to the east) was a critically important factor in our ultimate success.

In September 1999, we had had a particularly awful negotiating with the companies in Ankara. They insisted the pipeline concept was unrealistic, and not marketable. Riding back to the embassy, I discussed with Ambassador Parris how we might break the logjam. I was doing a press briefing, as was habit during the negotiations -- there was intense interest in the local and regional press. Mark and I hatched up a little plan and off I went off to meet the press. During my opening statement, I challenged the companies saying, "It is for the companies to stop using the process of negotiations to block a test of the idea in the marketplace. Instead of arguing in the abstract, let's get an agreement and see whether it flies in the marketplace." They were apoplectic for being called them out in public.

A posse of oilmen descended on the White House -- I wasn't there -- but heard that they complained to Sandy Berger about what I had said in Ankara, who apparently responded, "Let me see if I understand this," and he repeated back what they said. And then he said something like, "So what did he say that's wrong?" Checkmate. But, we needed one more engagement to get the door open to real negotiations. A couple weeks later Sir John Brown (now Lord Brown), CEO of BP, came to Washington to see for himself whether the White House was locked on this thing. We had a mantra we had used throughout the negotiations, "Go to Ceyhan, Susa's not an option."

Brown came to find out whether that was true. We had worked with the CIA to model currents in the Bosporus and to demonstrate what would happen to a 200,000-ton tanker that lost propulsion as it went made a turn near Istanbul's second bridge. The Bosporus makes several major turns, and the at surface level and below run in opposite directions. What the model showed is that if a tanker lost propulsion as it was going into this curve, the currents would inevitably pull it onto the rocks near that bridge on the Europe side, with obvious cataclysmic consequences in the middle of a major metropolitan area. We

played that for Lord Brown and repeated our conviction that Turkey would NEVER agree to allow this additional risk along an already overcrowded waterway. And we agreed with Turkey. At the end, he had heard what he came to find out. We weren't moving.

I think the DVD demonstration of the environmental threat also affected him-- he was talking about turning BP into "the Green Company" and this was a risk that could "blow up" big time. At the end of the meeting he said in essence we needed to work together, and he commanded his team to make that happen. BP was the lead company in the consortium with nearly a third of the shares. When BP moved, most of the others, except Exxon, moved with them. That didn't mean they rolled over on the negotiations -- every point, especially on tariffs and national responsibilities, was hard fought. But at least the negotiations moved off deadlock.

Exxon's position was interesting. They tended to be very conservative, preferring others to take early risk, and then buying in, even at a premium later, if circumstances warranted. Baku Ceyhan was all about risk -- both sovereign risk, and the risk of building and operating the pipeline across difficult terrain. (I understand that, when Exxon tried to buy in later, the pipeline consortium partners declined to open space).

Once negotiations began in earnest, the differences in national interests quickly came to the fore. Georgia initially cared principally around revenue, and added environmental concerns later to the mix. Azerbaijan principally cared about getting the thing in built; and Turkey didn't want to take too much risk. The companies wanted to put all the risk on the countries. In the end, the companies got a good deal -- low tariff and substantial risk and potential liability passed on to the countries. But the countries got the pipeline. It was an interesting dynamic. The United States, in effect working as a mediator between the two sides played a pivotal, catalytic role. The thing wasn't going to happen without us. Sometimes we had to push on our friends, especially Turkey, but sometimes we had to enlist the Turks to push on the Azeris and Georgians. Demirel was quite prepared to pick up the telephone and call his friend Heydar Aliyev, as he did a couple of times. And both of them were prepared to pick up the phone and call Eduard Shevardnadze to break through some of the bureaucratic wheel spinning. With business, the relationships were a bit more formal, but we maintained generally good relations with the energy companies throughout.

And eventually parties agreed to the intergovernmental agreement -- we used the occasion of a November OSCE meeting in Istanbul as a bookend to promote closure, since the presidents all would be there. President Clinton wouldn't ordinarily have had a signing role -- but parties (at least the three countries) wanted him to sign as a "witness." The IGA negotiations went right up to the last hour. On the morning of the signing, two things happened. One, the weather was abominable and the Turks, who had hoped to stage a ceremony on Bosporus, were forced to move the event indoors. The second thing was that the Georgians balked at some provision, perhaps thinking that, at the last moment thinking, they'd have more leverage. I was sitting on a floor at the conference site with a cell phone (that was my office) talking to the negotiator for the Georgians at

his hotel. We weren't getting anywhere. Eventually, I said to him, “Look, you’ve got 10 minutes or we’re calling President Shevardnadze.” “Call me back.”

Nine and a half minutes later he called back saying, “Well, just one condition, we’re in another part of Istanbul and we’re having a little trouble getting to the signing -- can you get us a car?”

I said, “Done.”

That was the final hurdle. A couple hours later, I was with President Clinton in a holding room -- I have that picture in my living room. I’m standing there, and he’s sitting in a chair, head cocked, listening, and asking a lot of detailed questions about the negotiations and what it meant. He knew an incredible amount about the dynamic of the negotiations. And then we walked over to the ceremony and, when we walked in, it was really kind of cool -- Demirel led President Clinton in and I followed immediately behind -- just the three of us. I was in a row of people behind the leaders -- and the only picture I have of that one is a picture showing my elbow, cradling my briefing book.

After the ceremony, as we were walking out, Sandy Berger said to the president, “Sir, could I have the pen you used?”

And president reached into his pocket, he took out the pen. He says, “Why?”

Berger replied, “I want to give it to Ambassador Wolf. It’ll mean a lot more to him than it does to you.”

I remember the president looking at the pen and saying, “It’s only a two-dollar Pilot pen.”

Berger said, “Pen please.”

Anyway, I have that pen, framed with a copy of the document Clinton witnessed…but what’s important about that signing was the pipeline it presaged. It was a powerful statement, and I was so proud to see the actual pipeline a few years later when I was invited to the opening at Ceyhan. Our diplomacy helped tens of millions of people to have this, this option. More than a pipeline and its million barrels of oil a day, the corridor created national vitality for the Azeris, for the Georgians, and for Turkey, and an additional energy resource for global markets. Remember when the Russians were attacking Georgia a few years ago, the oil pipeline was a big part of the story. The opportunity that was forged with Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (the pipeline’s new name) was an opportunity to create the energy corridor linking Azeri energy fields to Turkey and then the west. But for Georgia, it was a lifeline to the west.

It wasn't just work by John Wolf and Matt Bryza. It was the United States, using its influence, to do something that advanced security and prosperity in a part of the world where the U.S. and Europe had important interests. Our role was to help the parties to see that, together, they could achieve a lot more than they were going to achieve separately.

In the end, not only the countries, but the companies involved, I suspect would agree that the BTC pipeline was a very worthwhile enterprise.

The other part of the story was trying to get gas from across the Caspian. The president of Turkmenistan at the time was President Niyazov, who was an incredibly venial and despotic leader. He never for a second had the strategic considerations that motivated the other regional leaders. His only mission in life was to wake up each morning alive. And he was desperately afraid that, if he agreed to pipe gas westward, one morning he'd "wake up dead." He was unwilling to do anything that was going to cut Turkmenistan's substantial gas revenues from the Russians, most of which flowed into accounts he controlled personally.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: There was a huge opportunity to do something that would have benefited Turkmenistan strategically. Gas prices in the west would have been higher, and in cash, vs. the barter (largely cheap consumer goods) that he got from Russia. They missed out because of Niyazov's veniality and fear, but also in part because Niyazov and Heydar Aliyev couldn't abide each other.

Niyazov was a colorful guy, sort of burly, paunchy, and Soviet looking. Always wanted to dominate any setting that he was in. In Turkmenistan, there's a tradition of the big handshake. You know, you sort of take your hand from behind your back and throw it into the other guy's hand, clasp hands and shake. I showed up once, did the old big shake thing, and recall seeing one of the heavy rings he habitually wore go flying up to the air, arching, then clanking to the floor in a corner. There was a stunned silence from his whole team -- this had never happened. The minister of energy dove after the ring, retrieved it, and returned it to his president. Only then was the silence broken when Niyazov broke into peals of laughter.

Another time, they were providing transportation for Matt and me, and a policeman actually stopped us. The driver got out and apparently told the policeman whom he was trying to shake him down, "You don't want to do that. This is the president's car." End of traffic stop.

One final vignette, we had a VIP visitor on one trip and Niyazov hosted us one of the presidential summer palaces. There were enormous amounts of liquor, dancing girls and much too much food. The drinking was so prodigious that I remember telling our security detail we needed to get their principal and leave *right away*. We almost made it but for a few last rounds of toasts in the parking lot -- and Niyazov gifting to our guest an Arabian stallion -- I think the horse was regifted for every important visitor whom Niyazov hosted.

My final visit (my ninth) to Turkmenistan was memorable. While we had little hope for advancing negotiations, President Demirel wanted us to make one last effort -- and so I went to Ashgabat with U/S Balkan from the Foreign Ministry. One thing for which the

Turkmen never could be faulted was their hospitality…from arrival to departure. So it was noteworthy when, on this trip, Mithat and I deplaned and there was NO ONE to meet us, no one. We were standing out in front of the front wheel well and I remember asking Mithat whether he remembered the reported fate of two British officers tossed in a pit in Samarkand in the nineteenth century. His only reply with a smile was, "Stop it."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: Anyway, when we met the president, Niyazov embraced Balkan as the representative of his Turkic brother, Suleyman Demirel…He then turned on me and for the next 20 minutes just excoriated me for being a stooge of Turkmenistan's enemy, Azerbaijan, and Heydar Aliyev. It was just a complete monologue. He categorically rejected participation in a cross-Caspian gas pipeline. A couple hours later, at the hotel, I had fallen asleep and I woke up to see a rerun of my dressing down by Niyazov, this time dubbed in English. I thought to myself, "He recorded and is televising the meeting…but who's talking?" And it turned out they had recorded Matt's simultaneous translation to me…tho' Matt confided he only translated about a third of Niyazov's denunciation.

Q: Did you say anything back?

WOLF: Not much. There was nothing to say. This was just an imperious tongue lashing that went with the territory.

Q: Well, interesting assignment. And you moved on them to assistant secretary for non-proliferation?

WOLF: Yes. My replacement in CBED was Beth Jones, who had been Ambassador to Kazakhstan. We had been trying to get Kazakhstan to put oil into the pipeline project, but hadn't succeeded to date. Beth tried for a while and then moved on to EUR. I went into sort of a holding pattern. This lasted until early 2001, when a new administration came in and John Bolton, who was going to be undersecretary for arms control, put in a good word for me as assistant secretary for nonproliferation.

Q: Well, why don't we end here for today and we'll pick that up in our next session?

WOLF: Good.

Q: Today is December 9, 2014. John, tell me how you were selected to be assistant secretary for non-proliferation?

WOLF: One never really knows. I mentioned that I had been warming up several times in the bullpen for ambassadorial assignments, but they didn't work out. So I was basically at loose ends. I had a conversation with John Bolton who had been nominated, or perhaps just confirmed, as undersecretary for arms control and international security. We still had a good relationship from our first time together in IO. He recommended me to Colin Powell; Secretary Powell interviewed me and offered me the job. The way things work in

Washington, I spent the spring filling out the papers that went to the WH and eventually the president made the nomination. The story really is framed by the fact that my nomination papers went to the Senate on September 11th, 2001. How anything moved from the White House to the Hill I'm not sure, but that's the official record. In fact, on September 11, I was in a temporary office they had lent me in T. What goes around comes around; it was the same office I had used when I served in T during the 1980's. I was on the telephone and talking to Joe Pritchard, who was to become my executive assistant in NP -- I'll talk more about Joe because he was a fundamentally important person in the NP hierarchy. I had just turned to ask Joe a question, and when I turned back to the window the fireball was just rising up out of the Pentagon.— a matter of seconds; it had not been that way before I turned away. So it was the start of a tumultuous period for the United States, a tumultuous period for the Non-Proliferation Bureau, and a tremendously challenging time for me. Those explosions in New York, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon framed a lot of the issues that were going to be important to the administration over the next couple of several years. My confirmation process was expedited by the Senate (I had my hearing September 24), I was confirmed quickly and I was sworn in on October 2nd.

Q: Anything particularly noteworthy about the hearing?

WOLF: Not that I recall. It was also my third Senate confirmation.

NP was a large bureau that had been created following the merger of the arms control agency (ACDA) into the State Department. The bureau had an outstanding roster of experienced civil servants who had come over from ACDA. The bureau was new, and had had only one prior assistant secretary, Bob Einhorn. During the 1990's, NP had exercised active leadership on a variety of nonproliferation issues (especially North Korea) often in direct competition with the regional bureaus (especially vis a vis South Asia). Secretary Powell had a very specific idea of how he wanted the department organized, and saw his regional assistant secretaries as first among equals on matters affecting their regions. We, in NP, however, were responsible for promoting our global interests in nonproliferation, including assertion of the principles embedded in arms control treaties on nuclear, chemical and biological warfare. Early on, I recall Deputy Secretary Armitage talking about the inherent tension this created. He cautioned me he didn't want NP cast in the role of "Jihadists" -- a reference to the friction experienced in the previous administration. We needed to find a way to work with the regional bureaus, even while we maintained and strengthened our global regimes.

There were more than enough problems to go around -- I had to chance my rhetoric a bit -- in NP, quite often the "opportunities" we found were opportunities to solve problems. At the top of the list was Iraq, and its apparent flouting of UN WMD sanctions. Iran's nuclear effort was an evolving threat. We had more or less "gotten over" the fact of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program (they already tested weapons in the 1990's), but we were profoundly concerned re onward proliferation and by the question of nuclear weapons security inside Pakistan (we saw the threat coming from either disaffected cliques within Pakistan's military or from Al-Qaeda which was seeking access to nuclear

technology and materials). I spent a lot of time over my tenure working with Pakistan's nuclear security officials on these issues. Other issues included: North Korea (the collapse of the Agreed Framework, expulsion of the IAEA inspectors and subsequent restart -- expansion -- of Nu's nuclear weapons program); the risk of country X (a next weapons want-a-be -- which turned out to be Libya); as well as the maintenance of the global framework agreements (NPT, CBW, CWC, Wassenaar). In addition to work against proliferators, the bureau also worked to promote nuclear security by its work (with DOE) to remove highly enriched uranium from former Soviet research reactors; its role with DOD in the Nunn-Lugar programs operating in Russia; and its work on nuclear cooperation agreements with third countries. Another big priority for me became the evolving U.S. -- India dialogue, including how to reconcile views on India's nuclear weapons program. A lot of problems, but also some real opportunities…and more than enough work to fill our time. I was blessed to have a super team of almost 250 CS and FS officers who came in every day determined to advance U.S. interests and protect our national security. The issues we addressed were complicated and often controversial. International negotiations were difficult, but they were inordinately complicated by the poisonous interagency process that hamstrung efforts to move forward on almost every issue tremendously increased the complications there.

Q: So did you report to the under secretary for political affairs?

WOLF: Good question. Early on, I had several conversations with Rich Armitage. Rich was by far the most effective deputy whom I recall during the 34 years I was at State. He had an encyclopedic grasp of the issues, *all over the world.* He had an uncanny ability to find things out. With Rich, it was always better to confess than to be found out…
Q: Oh no.

WOLF: Armitage was remarkably loyal up and down -- that is, if people were doing the secretary and his bidding, he was a strong defender always there to provide counsel or assistance. Much the way I remember Ambassador Hinton, Armitage was kind of like the lioness protecting the pride. And the other thing that made him incredibly effective was that he had an absolute mind meld with Colin Powell. They had been friends for years and they talked many times every day. I remember once I was in seeing Armitage and the phone rang. He said, "Just a second, it's the secretary (who was traveling abroad). He wants a piece of paper." Sure enough, Armitage had anticipated the Secretary's question and had the paper in his hand.

Rich told me in one of those sessions where I was trying to navigate past difficulties between T and NP, "John, you report through U/S Bolton, but never forget that you work FOR the guy down the hall," pointing toward Powell's office, and for the president. That was really very important because that defined Powell's expectations for assistant secretaries. He wanted them speaking their minds, not just echoing the views of someone else in the hierarchy. He met with us every morning (at 0830 sharp), and everybody had a chance to speak. If there was an issue that needed a fast answer, he gave it, or arranged to meet immediately after the meeting. So I did report to T, but based on the secretary's and Rich Armitage's injunction, they wanted to hear my views, not hear me parroting John

Bolton's views. And that became part of the story as, as the months and then years went by.

Q: Tell our readers what T stands for.

WOLF: T symbolized "technology" I suppose, but it also was the initial of Curtis Tarr, who was the first incumbent of the, of the position. T in 2001 was renamed U/S for Arms Control and Security Affairs, but still "T." Bolton was responsible for NP, the Arms Control Bureau, the Verification Bureau, and the Political-Military Bureau. While it sounds like each had discreet and specialized tasks, in the Bolton world. lines became exquisitely mangled as he wheeled and dealed trying to assert his own logic through the system. My time in NP started out well. The first 5-6 months, he'd summon me to his office five, six times a day and we'd talk about lots of different things; it was really good though sometimes NP staff worried it was delaying business in the front office. Under Secretary Bolton is a really smart person, always the best briefed and always one if not the most opinionated people in the room. His approach to leadership was, "Everyone should agree with me; my view is the right view." That unfortunately was the seed of real problems over time, especially given the Secretary's expectations. There were issues where my staff and I simply couldn't agree with JRB's positions on a number of issues. Example, we were discussing sanctions in a proliferation case. Bolton's views on existing law contradicted those of L, and the views of Will Taft, the Legal Advisor. Everybody was lined up on one side, NP, the regional bureaus and L; Bolton had a different view, and insisted his reading of the law was right. This was more than Yale (Bolton) vs. Harvard (Taft). What was important was that Taft was the secretary's principal legal advisor. And it seemed to me that on this question of law I needed to take my legal guidance from the legal advisor. Bolton saw my disagreement with him as disloyalty. That was I believe the first case where Bolton and I split, but it presaged what became continuing trench warfare between T, NP, and most of the rest of the State Department (with the exception of T sycophants in VC and Arms Control -- whom Bolton increasingly inserted into policy matters inside the Department and in the interagency that were clearly in NP's charter). It was a difficult time.

Q: What was the outcome on that particular issue?

WOLF: I believe the Secretary agreed with the legal adviser's recommendation. But as with almost so many issues in that first term of the Bush administration, making a decision didn't mean that a decision had been made. Bolton often worked in tandem with people on the NSC staff, in the office of the VP, and at Defense, to subvert State Department decisions. Readjudication of issues was a never-ending process; it consumed days and weeks, and I often thought that was Bolton's and others' intent was to tie up the process (abusing it) to block any substantive decision with which they differed. Interestingly, in Bolton's own book, he talked about process and substance and claimed there was undue attention to process, terming it a principal problem. Talk about pot calling the kettle black! On issue after issue, the T staff would jump into policy deliberations, requiring bureaus' options memos to be drafted, redrafted and redrafted again. I had a policy of trying not to look at memos that were being discussed at the

working level because I wanted to see what the arguments were for and against. I didn't want to make a decision without facts. Conversely, the T modus operandi was to assert the facts and expect everyone to acquiesce. T staff regularly took raw drafts to Bolton and came back with his imperium. That didn't work with the regional bureaus or L, and frankly it didn't work for NP.

Enough on that. I thought we might start talking about some of the policy challenges I mentioned earlier. Certainly, the framing issues for me quickly became Iraq and Pakistan. These were both issues on which I had considerable earlier experience. I had worked on Pakistan's nuclear question since 1981 and on Iraq nonstop during the First Gulf War.

First Iraq -- at the end of the war, the UN had passed a resolution continuing comprehensive sanctions and imposing a rigorous WMD inspection process to prevent Iraq from reestablishing the WMD programs it had been developing (and using) during the 1980's. However, by 2001, support for the comprehensive sanctions was eroding rapidly in the face of visible privation. On the other hand, Iraq had grown increasingly truculent, weapons inspections had lapsed, and there was abundant intelligence, which we had directly and through the UN sanctions committee, suggesting Iraq was attempting to reconstitute its WMD programs.

One of the first orders of business that Secretary Powell wanted us to get on was a "smarter" set of sanctions, targeted on items that could contribute to a WMD program, a weapons of mass destruction program, and exemption goods which would provide food, medicine, and humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people. Our concern was Saddam Hussein and any WMD ambitions that he might still have; sanctions weren't meant as a lifelong punishment for the Iraqi people. As soon as I became A/S, we began to work on a new resolution to replace UNSC Res 687, which had maintained comprehensive sanctions on Iraq since the war in 1991. That was a resolution that a small group in the Department had largely drafted on the coffee table in my IO office. For the replacement, there were two main arenas for negotiation. Internationally, the key country was Russia, and I led a team that did a series of negotiations with them. The much more difficult negotiations took place in the our interagency group, with unrelenting pressure from elements of DOD, OVP, and T staff to prevent any substantive loosening of the sanctions regime, irrespective of Secretary Powell's instructions.

DOD's hubris in these talks were amazing -- and they regularly labeled us as amateurs who needed their mature guidance to do anything no matter how trivial. It didn't matter that they were mainly civilian political appointees with no more direct knowledge than I had (maybe less), and certainly less than our NP experts. In one conversation, a much younger DAS at DOD barked at me just to "washfax" something over to him so he could correct it…then started to instruct me how the interagency fax system worked. With some exasperation I recall telling him, "I know what the Washfax is; in fact, I've working in the interagency process for longer than you've been alive."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: True story. But what was embedded in this was a concerted process by a group of people in government whose whole mission seemed to be designed to drag out our deliberations and prevent meaningful negotiations on a new, "smart sanctions" resolution. As with the BTC negotiations, they used the process of deliberations to block a test of substance, e.g., in actual international negotiations. While exhausting, we finally wore them down, came up with lists, held the negotiations and reached agreement first with Russia, then the P-5, then the UNSC as a whole. The process created an inclusive list of proscribed items -- everything else by default would be licensed -- following review of export orders by the UN Sanctions Committee.

The final day with the Russians had a final humorous moment,. We were in Geneva, my core team of 4-5 from the interagency, plus a couple "minders" representing the agencies that did not want any compromise. Arrayed on the Russian side of the table were 12-14 heavyset Russian officials, including a number of generals, all wearing dark suits. When we finally got done I said, "I think we're done." But one of my staff, a doctor from the Army Medical Core, leaned over and whispered that we needed one more item. We'd been in that room for hours, and I know the Russians were thinking "not something else. When my major told me what it was though I asked him to describe it to the plenary and introduced him to the Russian side. Speaking in something of a monotone, our doctor said, "Yes sir, we need to add to the list Chinese hamster ovaries."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: The Russians were stunned and several looked at each other not believing the translation they'd heard -- Chinese hamster ovaries. Our doctor explained that hamster ovaries are a perfect test bed for testing bio agents. I could see the Russians listening to this through their interpreter and shrugging their shoulders. "I said, so that's the last item. Is there any disagreement?"

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: *(laughs)* Their delegation head shot a look at his colleagues that would have frozen stone, and he quickly said no objection.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: So I went back to the U.S. Mission, and called Secretary Powell to report we were done…and after offering congratulations he asked if there were any problems… "No, sir, though there was a bit of hiccup when we mentioned "Chinese hamster ovaries." The silence on Powell's end was profound 'til he said, "I suspect you had to there." Yes sir, I noted.

Pritchard, who was with me and I were convulsed in laughter.

There was one more chapter to the hamster ovary saga, a few months later, at an awards ceremony I hosted to give recognition to my interagency team members. The Secretary

attended. At the conclusion we called up Dr. Major Von Tersch, who stood at attention while Joe read a citation awarding Robert the Order of the Chinese Hamster Ovaries…with accommodating certificate showing a hamster. The Secretary laughed as hard as anyone else.

The reason I mention this last vignette is that it relates to something important that I had done I suppose intuitively, but which the Secretary and Joe had learned specifically in the army was a vital ingredient of good morale -- and that is humor. Every morning, at the Secretary's 0830 staff meeting we discussed issues of international import, sometimes matters of life and death. But every so often (maybe weekly), Powell and Rich Armitage would tell some story or do some antic that got all of us laughing. Once, over two days, Powell told us he'd be explaining "something that would change our lives…" only the next day to describe "TIVO" -- to a guffawing group of assistant secretaries. He wanted people to understand that, as important as all those issues were, there's a life outside the State Department, and as assistant secretaries we had the responsibility to make sure that people who worked for us also understood that they needed a work-life balance -- in order to be more effective in their work. Morale counted.

The meeting contents were sensitive, but we were supposed to take the substance of the meetings, and its tenor, and promulgate it down through, through our bureaus. While many days were tough in NP, with serious issues internationally and unrelenting interagency infighting, I am really proud of the work my bureau did. The bureau every day put its shoulder to the wheel and we worked with a common purpose. And I'll come back to that at the end, but it was a terrific bureau where people with technical expertise who had been doing this for decades joined together with people who came in with political, and regional policy points of view. We worked as a team. So that was the first issue, Iraq sanctions. We got the sanctions list refined.

The second thing I would talk about is, UNMOVIC (United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission). UNMOVIC was a UN panel. There were 16 of us there in our individual capacities, although there was one "expert" from each of the P5 UNSC members. This group of UNMOVIC commissioners was empaneled to advise the head of the UN Monitoring Group, the group charged with inspecting Iraqi facilities to ensure Iraq wasn't violating the WMD sanctions resolutions. And I used regularly to present the evidence that we had. UN weapons inspections had taken place in the 1990's but were suspended in 1998. They were reinstituted in fall 2002 and continued for six months. The UN had active components looking both at questions related to Iraq's nuclear and CW/BW programs. Some of the information on which they based their inspections was generated from lingering questions from the 1990's inspections; other work was based on information that various countries gave to UNMOVIC. While they found a few remnants of earlier Iraqi WMD programs dating back to the 1980's they found no signs of an ongoing program. We never could understand why, but we couldn't or wouldn't believe that it was because there was no ongoing WMD work. At first, the information we provided was pretty sketchy -- certainly not what we considered our best intelligence. We constantly second-guessed UNMOVIC's inability to find concrete signs of a WMD program -- and eventually we provided the UN and IAEA with more concrete

leads -- or what we thought was very good information -- but still to our surprise the very good information didn't turn out either.

I have two particularly bad memories. In one case, I had documentary evidence that had come from team members about something where it appeared that the UN had pulled its punches on analyzing something, or hadn't followed up information. On instructions, I went to NYC to call out UNMOVIC, and a particularly feisty discussion with Hans Blix, the Executive Director, in his office. He thought that we actually had stolen the material from UN files. And so he was seriously grieved. Since I was the only one in the room he vented at me, representing the U.S., and I went back in kind. I wanted from him an explanation about what we interpreted the photographs to show; he wanted to talk about the process. It wasn't a great conversation -- with zero productive outcomes.

The other time, I was to brief commissioners on our findings re mobile BW/CW labs. Our IC had concluded that the Iraqis were using these labs as part of a covert BW program. We based our conclusions on information from a defector whose information reportedly had been corroborated with another national intelligence service. I had a whole presentation and printed booklet detailing the case. Secretary Powell was to use the same IC study as part of his February 2003 presentation to the UNSC. It turned out, after the fact, that this was erroneous information, and a circular validation process, since the corroboration was based on the same account by the same disingenuous defector. We were just *all wrong*. But we were absolutely certain that we were perfectly correct. Months later, as it became clear that the information was wrong AND that a number of IC officials apparently knew (or suspected) the information to be wrong, it left a really sick feeling. This is only one of many cases vis a vis Iraq where the intel was wrong, and the policy conclusions we drew were plain wrong -- and these conclusions were used to justify a war that continues a dozen years later.

That said, there was a lot of documentary evidence, hard evidence based on export license requests etc., that were presented to the UN Sanctions Committee. that strongly indicated purchases of dual use technology by agents associated with Iraq's previous WMD programs. They added to our conviction that Iraq was developing its WMD programs. When one saw dual-use items being procured by shady characters for a purpose that didn't meet the common sense tense, one couldn't easily rationalize it away. And, remember it's a lot easier sitting here in 2014 to have this dispassionate discussion after it's abundantly clear that the WMD program was Saddam Hussein's big lie. But when you were sitting there in 2002/2003, the World Trade Center was virtually still smoldering, the Pentagon was draped in tarpaulins and we were at war in Afghanistan. The mood of the country was just entirely different.

The September 11 Commission faulted the IC for failing to connect the dots, which was hard pre-Sept 11, and was just as hard vis a vis Iraq. The default connection was a finding of guilty. We were wrong. I was wrong. Perhaps it is only that we saw what we wanted to see, but there were a lot of dots that even today would argue that Iraq was at least stockpiling capabilities that could have regenerated a WMD program (especially in CW and BW). As a government, we, as policy people, didn't ask enough tough questions. I

remember I had a discussion with the two protagonists in the centrifuge, tubes discussion. They were discussing these expensive, esoteric metal tubes that some people believed were being used to fashion centrifuges to enrich uranium. Others, for instance experts from Oak Ridge, argued the contrary. This is where my English major failed me because I either didn't ask the right questions, or I drew the wrong conclusions…it doesn't matter that many others did the same.

Q: Was there a certain amount of cherry picking of information or intelligence that fit what the White House wanted to have?

WOLF: Yes and no. So now we come to the secretary's speech. The secretary was given a speech written in the White House, which was a basket of rotten cherries. It was long on bluster, short on facts. The secretary detailed a small group to meet at the CIA to review intelligence, then craft a speech using validated intel. Tho' I wasn't there, one of my absolutely best people was. And he was there every minute of the day for seven days. Larry Williamson, who was the secretary's chief of staff, headed the group. And they took things as usable only if there was a second source of validation. What they never knew was that sometimes the independent validation was just a variant on the original source story. So you'd have a piece here and then you had a piece from another intelligence agency which validated the original evidence. But, it appears that at least some at the CIA knew that the original sources, e.g., the source for the BW mobile labs, wasn't credible…and independent validation of faulty intel is still faulty intel. Too much of the information used, apparently, was this kind of false echoes. The case Secretary Powell presented to the UNSC wasn't rock solid, but it was sufficient to lean independent listeners toward the conclusion that Iraq was developing a WMD program.

I remember seeing Powell shortly after he got back down from New York and my sense was that he thought he had made his best college try but that he would have liked to have had a stronger case.

From there, inertia carried the United States forward because we were already deploying troops to the region and there came a point where the president ordered us into war -- even in the face of negative findings by the UN investigators. The *casus belli* was Iraq's obstruction, which translated to non-compliance with mandatory UNSC resolutions. History will record that the U.S. went to war with one avowed purpose, to eliminate Iraq's emerging capabilities and weapons of mass destruction. We did not find that capability. However, the U.S. was not prepared for the day after we'd won the war. Troop levels were woefully insufficient to occupy Iraq and maintain order. If there was evidence of a WMD program, in any form, it likely was destroyed in the weeks of civil unrest and rioting that took place after Baghdad fell. It is unlikely though that any evidence there would have justified the 12 years of war, the thousands of lives that have been lost, and the over one trillion dollars that has been spent and will be spent (on veterans) in the years ahead. I'm not proud of my part in this costly blunder, but I am proud of the work my bureau did through this period. They did their work as true professionals. Their leaders, at every level, didn't do what we needed to do.

Q: What -- if he had the WD capability, what was it that we thought he was likely to do with it?

WOLF: I don't think the debate ever got so granular. It was enough for most advocates that Iraq seemed to be developing WMD in defiance of the restrictions from the UNSC. Certainly we talked re the risks to neighbors, especially Israel, and the risk of leakage to terrorists who might use such materials against the homeland. Perhaps Iraq was simply buying these dual use items so that once sanctions were lifted Iraq would be able to resume WMD programs. At the time, recall Iran was an avowed enemy of Sunni dominated Iraq. We'll never know.

Q: Other aspects of your service in NP that you want to cover?

WOLF: That's Iraq. Re Iran, we had known for years that Iran had a covert program to develop nuclear weapons. The intelligence was much more specific vis a vis Iran than it was for Iraq. It involved not only the work toward an actual weapon, but also parallel work to develop longer-range ballistic missiles.

In 2002 I led the U.S. delegation to a preparatory meeting for the Review Conference for the NPT (Revcons are held every five years; preparatory meetings take place annually in the interim). Part of my speech stressed the need for greater vigilance and concrete action by supplier countries to prevent nuclear weapon state wantabees. I alluded to one country in the Middle East region, without naming Iran specifically, since our intelligence was then too sensitive. The next year, after one of the Iranian resistance groups had released photographs of a covert Iranian enrichment site, I was able to be a lot more specific. Iran was a constant concern in the bureau, in the interagency, and in our work with allies and the IAEA. We spent hundreds, thousands, of hours tracking and trying to prevent Iranian procurement around the world. At the time, Iran lacked many of the kinds of materials, and knowledge, to advance its program (unlike today when it is largely self-sufficient). We lobbied other governments to staunch illegal exports (illegal because almost everything was on a restricted list agreed to within the Nuclear Supplies Group) and the Missile Technology Control Group. We used sanctions when our lobbying failed. And, in a number of case, we or friends actually seized shipments in transit. The Proliferation Security Initiative, which was initiated in May 2003, was a valuable tool to assist such interdiction.

These efforts were a bit "thumb in the dike;" they didn't prevent all leakage, but certainly lengthened out the time Iran needed to develop its capabilities.

There was lots of discussion about what Iran would do with a weapon. While the superficial analysis focused directly on an Iranian (government) attack against Israel, or perhaps one of our friends in the Gulf, I thought the greatest risk would be leakage from state control to non-state control, via the Revolutionary Guards. And the risk of a nuclear weapon in the hands of terrorist elements creates a whole new risk calculus in juxtaposition to our traditional presumptions re states. That was an extraordinarily scary prospect to --

Q: Mean in the hands of people who really mean us harm.

WOLF: Yes, groups and people who'd have no hesitation to use a weapon. The theories of mutually assured destruction had no meaning in this context. These were people who in any event were to blow themselves up -- or perhaps simply to order their followers to blow themselves up. The Revolutionary Guard and individuals inside Iran were very close to such groups in the Middle East. Even if it weren't a threat to the homeland, it still would be a significant threat to our closest allies and friends. Early on the Europeans were skeptical about the Iranians, both in terms of Iran's nuclear potential and the risks of its missile program. I was having a conversation with my German counterpart, on the top floor of the Foreign Ministry -- a modern building where the executive dining room has large plate-glass windows. To make the point to him, I said, "Look, this Shahab-3 missile, it can't hit the United States, but if they get it developed they can land it right in the center of this table." He blanched because at the point they weren't thinking they were inside the range of Iran's future missiles, maybe Israel, maybe Turkey, but not Berlin. They soon became more active, not as a result of what I said that day, but as they came to recognize that this was a threat to core Europe. In fact, in 2002 or 2003, the EU wanted us to join in negotiations with Iran to stem the quickening nuclear threat. The hawks within the administration, again in OVP, DOD and Bolton, fought tool and nail against any collaboration –fearing the Europeans wouldn't be sufficiently tough in the negotiations. On this one, I sided with the hawks.

Q: This issue of, this issue of leakage, did that also apply to concerns about Iraq, or were you more concerned about Saddam Hussein --

WOLF: Iraq and Iran were separate issues, but I suppose we had similar concerns re Saddam Hussein -- less about leakage, and mostly based on a belief that Saddam Hussein was not seen as a rational actor; if he had nuclear weapons, he'd use them. On Iran, we had firm indications of interaction between Pakistan's AQ Khan and Iran. We didn't have such evidence re Iraq.

As I mentioned, we spent a lot of time working to thwart Iran's procurement efforts and to undercut its development programs. Certainly this effort slowed their progress, but was not sufficient to stop it.

Next one on my issues list was Pakistan. From the day I took office in October 2001, I joined a frantic interagency consideration of the risks associated with Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, the short hand version of which was the risk of "loose nukes." There was less concern that the Pakistani government was going to give its so-called "Islamic bomb" to another country or to use it vs. India. There was enormous concern about the activities of its nuclear weapons development godfather, AQ Khan, as well as concern about the security of weapons given worries about internal security, worries about instability in the armed forces, etc. We had been watching Pakistan's nuclear weapons development for over twenty years, including Khan's establishment of a very successful illicit international procurement program. Despite our pressure on Pakistan, and pressure

by Nuclear Supplier Group countries, we had been largely ineffective in stopping Pakistan, and they had ultimately tested a weapon in the late 1990's. We did over time have considerable success penetrating the Khan network, but needed to find/make an opportunity to take it down in a way it stayed down.

Washington's concern about the compromise of Pakistan's nuclear weapons to Jihadi groups went up exponentially after Sept. 11. Exacerbating this was the risk the stolen weapons might be used vs. U.S. forces operating in the region. A task for the nonproliferation working group was to measure and improve Pakistan's nuclear weapons security. That was pretty difficult because the Pakistanis didn't want to tell us anything; they didn't trust us, worried we would use the information to sweep in and pluck out the weapons.

We were unclear on basic things -- the chain of command, their nuclear weapons doctrine, their storage protocols, what if any safeguards they had developed to prevent unauthorized use of the weapons…and much more…including of course specific locations where the weapons were stored. It wasn't enough for instance to know weapons were at Sargodha AFB -- that's an enormous geographic area. Were they assembled, and how were they stored? The White House was desperate to know more -- about everything. I led a group that began a dialogue; their side was led by Lt. General Kidwai, who headed a army cell responsible for the nuclear weapons security I couldn't go to Pakistan because our embassy was paranoid (appropriately so) that if I showed up, the assistant secretary for non-proliferation, that would not be well received by the GOP or the population. So we met in Switzerland, the U.S. and once in London. I forgot how often we met, but it was more than a couple times. We had a continuing discussion about issues like the chain of command, custody relationships, and then eventually it morphed into a discussion about ways in which we could provide advice or assistance remotely because there was no way Pakistan would allow us on site. There were pretty strict legal limits on what we help we could provide, even were Pakistan to ask for specific help. This included prohibition on any assistance that might help them to make a bomb -- which was interpreted to include items like arming locks that would render the weapons useless without the proper authorization codes. We did help them develop the kind of personality risk assessments the U.S. regularly uses for people who have access to our nuclear weapons. It was a very interesting set of discussions, and there were some training programs the Department of Energy was able to do, though always off-site.

Q: Was AQ Khan the one who collaborated with the North Koreans?

WOLF: Yes. It was Khan who originally stole Dutch enrichment technology and brought it back to Pakistan. He was the long time head of the Kahuta uranium enrichment facility -- including in the mid-1980's when Ambassador Hinton went to urge President Zia to throttle the program back (enrichment had reached a level in excess of 8% -- from there it was relatively easy to get to 90% plus, the level needed for weapons grade material). Over time he reversed engineered Pakistan's covert procurement network for nuclear materials to barter Pakistani nuclear machinery to countries like North Korea -- in this case in return for missile technology. He did the same with Iran…and I could never

understand why Pakistan didn't hang him for helping a neighbor with which Pakistan had very strained relations. Over time the Khan network became in essence like Nukes Incorporated, procuring, manufacturing and shipping materials at a minimum to N. Korea, Libya, and Iran. His hub was in Dubai, but he had agents and facilities in South Africa, Turkey, Malaysia, and South Africa, as well as in Western Europe. It never was clear whether this was a rogue operation or government sanctioned. I find it hard to believe the government was unaware of his activities.

I think for several/a number of years, the IC had missed that Khan was not only procuring for Pakistan, but exporting nuclear technology and materials. That had changed by the late 1990's. Over time, the IC developed considerable information and even access into Khan's network. The challenge though was figuring out the best way to collapse the network, since we wanted to be sure we took it out root and branch.

In my conversation with General Kidwai, I regularly told him, "You have a problem. You have this enormous leakage and it's going to North Korea, it's going to x, y, and z." He must have been a very good poker player since he never showed any emotion and I was never clear what was news to him or what he already knew. In the end Musharraf did separate AQ Khan from the Pakistan program, got him out of Kahuta, and separated him from the official channels. But for a couple years more, Khan Inc. continued its nuclear proliferation business until we finally squashed it in the spring of 2004.

As I said, for me, this was the culmination of 20 years when I first went to Islamabad with U/S Buckley. The story only grew more and more concerning to the U.S. over the years because not only was a nuclear armed Pakistan face-to-face with India, but the Khan network that had grown up camouflaged by Pakistan's procurement network was selling to some of the most dangerous regimes in the world.

We spent a lot of time thinking about how to deal with AQ Khan and, in the interagency, there were circles within circles within circles. The Khan watch was an intense part of my personal brief, and I spent long hours at the WH in the office of Bob Joseph, the senior director for nonproliferation, in the company of other assistant secretary level participants from the CIA, Defense and periodically Energy. What we were doing and what we were considering was very tightly compartmented and to my knowledge there were no leaks. In the end, a joint effort from the WH and CIA revealed an opening via Libya -- the IC identified a large shipment going to Libya, which was interdicted and diverted to Italy. After intense negotiations, Qaddafi agreed to turn over his entire inventory of materials (mostly unassembled) plus voluminous documentation related to Libya's dealings with the Khan network. That's jumping ahead a few years.

One of the things that out that came with being the assistant secretary for non-proliferation was an assortment of secure phones, email systems etc., that I had only read about in books before I became assistant secretary. Frankly, State was way behind the technology curve, and we had to press to upgrade our equipment. There were some issues, particularly issues related to some of our counter-proliferation initiatives, where I'd go into the SCIF (secure conference facility) we had created in our conference room,

where I'd have to type personally messages that we'd have delivered by secure courier. In the building, for some matters, I delivered papers directly, and personally, to the Deputy Secretary. This was real time-consuming and sometimes "need-to-know" got in the way of "need-to-get-something-done." But the process worked. Relationships are important, and I give the NSC's Bob Joseph credit for his work to create those relationships and confidence. On some issues, and particularly the Khan issues, discussion was restricted to just a half-dozen of us, and that's where it stayed, it never showed up anywhere else.

The seizure of the shipment bound for Libya was done by a circle within a circle -- at the WH. Neither Bolton nor I were in the circle. However, once the Libyans agreed to relinquish their nuclear assets, there was a little mud wrestling began over who was going to manage the process and how this would be accomplished. I was in the middle of the mud puddle. My executive assistant, Joe Pritchard, an army retiree, had led an interagency group into North Korea to investigate a suspected underground nuclear facility. Joe organized and led the team to the DPRK, and found out that, in fact, it was just a big empty cave. For Libya, Ambassador Don Mahley, from the Arms Control Bureau, was made overall team leader, but Pritchard was charged with leading the group that would handle the nuclear equipment (and whatever documentation could be secured). Pritchard, a former Army officer, is action oriented, and he quickly created a team, and worked out logistics with the military, including backup options. In Tripoli, he established immediate liaison with the IAEA, which had sent a team there, and he also established his own channel with Libya's chief of intelligence, who was leading the effort for Libya. Although some elements in State wanted to hold IAEA at arms length, the international agency's imprimatur was important, both to verify independently the equipment in Libya, and its complete removal, as well as to validate the reams of documentation which Libya turned over.

Our job in Washington was to make sure the team had the resources it needed -- and quickly. Pritchard told us he needed a ship -- for heavy machine parts…we got him a ship. When he said he needed airlift capability for sensitive nuclear materials, some in DOD balked and offered only a C-130 -- which wouldn't have sufficed. Joe knew from his prep work about a DOD unit specially tasked for just such nuclear related contingencies, and when he had problems with DOD, I asked Secretary Powell to intervene. Joe got his heavy lift jet. Within several weeks, the stuff was wrapped, packed, shipped, and Libya's capability was taken back to zero.

But what was also important from all this was the wealth of documents which laid out in detail the operations of the AQ Khan network. We already had obtained a lot of this covertly over the years. There was however new information related to warhead design, which Khan was selling. A number of the documents actually had his handwritten notes in the margins. And, because the IAEA partnered in taking possession of the documents, we later would be able to use these documents in third countries with the IAEA seals of authenticity.

This gave us the capability to develop a comprehensive show and tell, without jeopardizing our own still hidden capabilities. In early 2004, our interagency group created a plan to bring down the network, as I said root and branch. I was tasked to work three or four countries. First Dubai. There, I met with the then Crown Prince, Sheikh Rashid, and laid out in some detail what we knew about the Khan network, with its operating headquarters in Dubai. We wanted Dubai to seize Khan's logistical facilities as well as to secure bank accounts and his computer network. During the conversation, one of the Crown Prince's advisers pushed back saying there wasn't sufficient evidence. The Crown Prince however quickly quashed that saying, "go ahead…we'll arrest them, search, and if we find something we'll keep 'em; if we don't we can let them go." In the event, they did act and shut Khan down in Dubai.

My next stop was Malaysia. I met there with Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, who had been FM when I was in KL as Ambassador. This was a bit delicate because the PM's son was reportedly one of the founders of Scomi, a firm Khan was using to manufacture several critical centrifuge parts. The PM pushed back saying that Scomi was simply a machine tool company fabricating parts for the oil and gas sector.

I said, "With all due respect, here's an illustration of a centrifuge." Using overlays, I pointed to several components for the centrifuge and told him we had inconvertible evidence the parts were manufactured at Scomi in Petaling Jaya. The overlays made clear where the pieces fit…and I assured the PM there were no other uses for such parts except in a centrifuge. We asked Malaysia to arrest a Sri Lankan who was one of Khan's key lieutenants for manufacturing, and they did.

Next stop was South Africa. Again, this was delicate since South Africa was very proud of its non-proliferation regime. During the apartheid era, South Africa had pursued a nuclear weapons program, but had ceased it (in I believe 1989). Subsequently, after adhering to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state, South Africa had implemented rigorous export controls (and was a leading voice in the G-77 for complete global nuclear disarmament). When I briefed them that a South African firm was actively manufacturing components for Khan, they were horrified, and moved quickly to close the company.

My final stop was Turkey, where we met with representatives from the Foreign Ministry and Customs service. As we laid out the case of involvement by a prominent Turkish firm, the Turks were at first flabbergasted and then furious. They quickly arrested the key businessman and I believe shuttered the factory.

Other people working for other agencies covered other countries, mostly in Europe. But our comprehensive efforts meant that we had, effectively, broken up the AQ Khan network. Khan was under house arrest in Pakistan, albeit it was loose house arrest to our chagrin. We were not allowed to interrogate Khan, and we had little confidence in the completeness of the readouts which Kidwai provided to us. Khan still had enormous street appeal in Pakistan as the father of their nuclear program. That, and I suspect GOP concern lest he finger any other high government official as complicit. So, we never fully rounded the circle, but we did succeed in taking down the most dangerous proliferation

network *ever* and one of the biggest potential risks to our national security. That was a big achievement, it reflected years of hard and often dangerous work in the field, and it was for all of us a source of significant satisfaction.

Those issues, Iraq, Iran, counter proliferation, Pakistan (nuclear security and the Khan network) consumed a lot of my time. I was fortunate to have two strong deputies including my principal deputy, Susan Burk who had come over from ACDA. She was just brilliant on the technical issues and history, as well as on policy matters. She was also extremely adept with people. Where I could be mercurial, she always was steady, but effective. In terms of bureau leadership, even tho' I had considerable travel and took a substantial absence in 2003 to work on another project, Susan assured that the bureau never missed a beat. She was immersed in all of our non-proliferation work, and took a leading hand on developing the Proliferation Security Initiative, a WH initiative to create a coalition of like minded countries to combat/stop proliferators.

We had a second line of responsibilities in NP focused on peaceful nuclear cooperation. This included programs to replace highly enriched uranium in former Soviet era, research reactors with less proliferation risky fuels. There also was a substantial involvement with the Nunn-Lugar programs focused on strengthening safeguards at the many sites in Russia where there was nuclear material, as well as retraining for Soviet era scientist who had been in Russia's complex WMD programs (nuclear, BW, and CW). Another NP office focused on negotiation of bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements, and several offices worked our relationship with the IAEA.

I had a terrific team of people and counted on the deputies and Pritchard to assure what needed to be done was being done -- and done properly. In addition to the front office team, we had a group of really excellent people in our Regional Affairs Office to work on country nonproliferation issues. In the State Department, there's an ongoing tension between Civil Service and Foreign Service, with some FSOs citing the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to give them pride of place. But in NP, I just needed the best people I could find, CS or FS, and we blended them together into a seamless team that got the work done effectively in the Department, in the interagency, and internationally. We started off deficient in the number of FSO's, and worked hard to recruit shining young stars to broaden the skill sets represented in the bureau. I did a lot of the recruiting personally when I traveled. We promised young FSOs a challenging assignment and promised to help them with onward assignments, and we did. FSO numbers rose from a handful in 2001 to 20 when I left.

Q: Out of how many personnel?

WOLF: Out of a couple hundred, 250 I guess.

Q: Really?

WOLF: But that was a lot more than two, which was what I had I think when we started. And you know, cycles are what the cycles are. Many of our slots were already encumbered with CS personnel, and it took time to get new assignments.

NP work was high stress, especially given the continuous interagency trench warfare. People were really stretched out. Joe and I tried to adopt our own techniques. So we had what we called "sessions on a porch" where we would pull up two chairs outside my office and we would take on all-comers, e.g., people bringing memos up to the front office or coming to consult. We offered "free" (often gratuitous) advice much along the lines of "Car Talk." So whatever the issue was that we could get somebody to talk -- because we simply wanted people to relax.

Early in my tenure, management had, over my objection, relocated my suite away from the corridors where NP had most of its offices. I didn't want to be isolated on the seventh floor when my staff was on floor three in the other corner of the building. So, while I'd often wonder down to the offices, we still needed a way to attract people up to us. The most important thing we could do was give people confidence that we were there to hear from them, and to help them. But, assuring that periodically we got a chance to laugh together also helped. When I retired in 2004, there was payback -- the entire bureau secretly wrote, rehearsed, then surprised Mahela and me with an NP musical knock-off using Oklahoma as its script. I was not sure whether to laugh or cry (I probably did both) seeing my staff singing and dancing a day in John Wolf's life in NP.

Now, where were we? We left off at AQ Khan. North Korea was another early crisis. In the early 1990's, there had been rapidly rising tensions over NK's nuclear program. At the 1993 EAP chiefs of mission meeting, it sounded like a problem that verged on war. Former President Carter helped open the way for concrete negotiations and led in fall 1994 to an "Agreed Framework" wherein North Korean reaffirmed its commitment to the NPT, and promised to freeze its own nuclear programs in return for a western commitment to build two, proliferation resistant, nuclear reactors. Fast forward, the new Bush administration, and especially DOD and Bolton, were adamantly opposed to the Agreed Framework. Tensions escalated as the IC also developed information that North Korea was building a covert enrichment program (even as its maintained a freeze on reprocessing). This came to a head in late 1992, and shortly thereafter North Korean expelled IAEA inspectors and restarted its nuclear programs. The question was what to do about it short of going to war.

Q: Was the previous administration seen as soft on North Korea? I mean what --

WOLF: Yes and no. In 1993 there had been a rapid drift to war (while we were still deeply enmeshed in the Middle East post Iraq). The Agreed Framework was well intentioned, but the verification regimes put in place were strictly limited to Yongbyon. And North Korea successfully hid continuing work on weaponization and we believed enrichment. The enrichment thread only revealed itself as a result of our access to AQ Khan's network. Tensions remained high and six party talks (China, the United States, North and South Korea, Japan, and Russia) were convened to try to find a resolution.

Susan Burk did most of the work for us on North Korea. The problem with North Korea went beyond nuclear; it also had an active ballistic missile development program, and it sold missile technology widely in the international marketplace, not withstanding efforts by the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) partners to interdict this weapons traffic. President Bush drew a very bright red line as to the consequences were we to see any nuclear weapons technology proliferation. Not withstanding, North Korean needed cash, and our concerns about possible nuclear leakage was very high.

I mentioned PSI. North Korean missile proliferation triggered this, one of the enduring structural innovations in the nonproliferation arena. We (the navy) had seized a shipment of missiles going from North Korea to Yemen, but found we didn't really have legal authority under international law to hold onto the missiles, and had to release the ship. Bob Joseph at the White House and Under Secretary Bolton came up with the idea of a loose coalition of willing partners who would cooperate to counter proliferation. Susan Burk helped Bolton organize an initial conference in Poland at which states agreed on a statement of principles. Using shared intelligence and joint action, PSI provided a strengthened tool in the war against WMD proliferation.

Q: Sounds like we invaded the wrong country.

WOLF: Even without nuclear weapons, any war with North Korea would have been extraordinarily costly, especially for South Korea and perhaps Japan. Certainly, though, it helped incentivize efforts to assure countries like Iraq, Iran, Libya, and country X didn't cross the nuclear threshold. I always worried a lot about Country X, since the risk was it might get there before we could stop it.

Q: Or Movement X.

WOLF: Or Movement X, which is even more worrisome.

Related to these proliferation concerns was the attention we gave to four, international, arms control regimes. These included global groups created either under treaties or agreements to control sensitive technologies related to nuclear, missiles, bio warfare and related technologies. We used violations of the global regimes as the basis for the sanctions actions against companies and/or individuals in the United States or mostly elsewhere who were selling prohibitive technologies -- or selling technologies without appropriate licensing, to entities that we knew (or suspected) were engaged in WMD related programs. There were often questions about the intelligence and about the suspected entities involved. While application of sanctions was an administrative process without room for the suspects to defend themselves, there was considerable debate within the administration -- often extended debate. The regimes were important, but I think we spent more time negotiating with ourselves on most of this stuff than we did with, with others. I delegated a lot of this work to Susan Burk and NP offices focused on these subjects, but since the Assistant Secretary of NP had the responsible to sign Federal Register notices imposing sanctions, I paid this matter a lot of attention, also.

There were I forget how many old Soviet reactors mostly located in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Many used highly enriched uranium, and the fuel was in many cases very poorly protected. DOE led an effort to come up with more proliferation resistant fuels, and we worked together to retrieve the HEU originally used as fuel. In most cases we did this in cooperation with the Russia, which then would take back and recycle the fuel. These operations came and went periodically and they absorbed short fractions of time and attention. They were quite sensitive, because the movement of nuclear fuel, especially outside the reactor, was a vulnerable point. In non-proliferation, the axiom is the technologies are not so hard to get a hold of, but the actual nuclear materials were incredibly difficult to obtain.

Under the Bush Administration, the position of President's Special Representative for the NPT Review Conference (RevCon) was consolidated into NP -- Norm Wulf, an ACDA veteran, had the job, which was counted as part of our front office. The NPT is reviewed every five years, with annual preparatory meetings in the interim. In 2000, the last "RevCon" had agreed to a list of 13 "practical" steps to increase confidence in the NPT, including a call for the next RevCon to consider a treaty on negative nuclear assurances, acceleration of a comprehensive test ban treaty, a fissile ban treaty, and commitments by the weapons states to accelerate disarmament. In the "real world" outside the minds of UN diplo-bureaucrats, many of these in any case would have been impractical, but embodied in a RevCon consensus, they took on a life of their own -- and we made few friends in ensuing years as we questioned (fought against) the 13 steps.

We regularly importuned the NPT parties to acknowledge that progress was being made on disarmament -- Russia's and our weapons' levels were decreasing, and a new arms control agreement -- the Moscow Treaty -- was agreed in 2003 that would lead to further voluntary reductions. But, for non-weapons states, our efforts as well as the questions of universality, e.g., somehow forcing Israel, Pakistan, and India into the NPT, were fundamental issues of controversy. NPT meetings tended to be dialogues of the deaf.

Q: Well, Bolton probably wasn't very enthusiastic, was he?

WOLF: No, the only part of the NPT he valued was the distinction between non-weapons states (NWS) and those with nuclear weapons. The only value for him was as a tool to promote non-proliferation…he had no time for peaceful nuclear cooperation or the arms control elements that also were central to agreement. Prior to 2004, NP (and a presidentially appointed NPT envoy housed in NP) led the interagency and the delegation to meetings. By 2004, Bolton interventions in the interagency led to a hydra-headed US delegation with three different assistant secretaries each making a speech in plenary, and saying different things. To say our colleagues in other countries were a little bit confused at the end of the process was kind of an understatement. Actually, since Bolton also attended long enough to speak, that made four US interventions in plenary. His goal, no progress in advance of the RevCon, was fully realized in the 2005 Review Conference.

The last major policy issue I would talk about was India-U.S. nuclear cooperation. From the start, President Bush wanted to improve our relationship with India, the largest

democracy in the world. In 2001, despite modest gains in the late nineties, the relationship still had many aspects of an adversarial relationship, in particular in relationship to export controls and cooperation in a variety of S&T areas. It was hard to sell something unless one could clearly demonstrate it wouldn't contribute to their nuclear weapons program, including any aspect of their missile/space program. And it was a very cumbersome process. Right from the start, the administration began to relax strictures, greatly simplifying the control lists administered by State and Commerce. Items on Commerce's list, dual use items, were liberalized more quickly than those at State, where the lists were more military oriented. There was a quickening in cooperation all across the relationship -- let a thousand flowers bloom -- including in areas of potential cooperation in science, technology, and space research. Educational and cultural exchanges grew exponentially. There were some necessary carve outs on space because of course that was tied to their own missile program and we were enjoined by law from supporting that. But there were a lot of things that we could do even in areas that had been closed off.

What the Indians really wanted however was recognition as a state with nuclear weapons -- and they floated expansive potential for civil nuclear cooperation. Neither our engagement, nor theirs was just a feel good exercise. India had made a strategic decision to open and modernize its economy, and for that to happen it needed technology and finance from the west. For us, it was a potential huge new marketplace, and strategically a very important relationship for stability in a considerable portion of Asia (albeit, Pakistan was wary of any lessening of Indo-US tensions). But, politically, India wanted us to discard what they saw as a "nuclear' stigma -- which came from its weapons program (not withstanding that it never had joined the NPT).

All of the discussions kept coming back to -- they weren't going to sign the NPT, and they didn't want any of the strictures that flowed out of the NPT. The NPT defined the world as five nuclear states -- without room for more (even though Pakistan, India, and Israel -- reportedly -- all had nuclear weapons programs). Other states that had had nuclear weapons research programs, or weapons, like South Africa, Brazil etc., had agreed to non-weapons status. Flowing from that bifurcation, there were strictures established within the Nuclear Suppliers Group to prevent the flow of nuclear technology to any state that hadn't adopted the NPT and the IAEA safeguards that went with the treaty. Maintaining this treaty and the distinctions it made was a huge red lines for every administration since the treaty entered into force in 1970. Our relationship with India for over 20 years had been encumbered by our differences, and a series of export controls had grown up that effectively limited trade and scientific exchange.

There were some in the administration in 2001 to 2004 who were pushing for us to simply throw this theology out the window, to be pragmatic. I guess I would say that was the "expediency" school versus the "defend principle" school. For me it was a question of principle. We had global, national security, interests in non-proliferation, interests that went beyond India. If we crashed them for India, how were we going to justify them for Pakistan, or South Africa, Brazil or Japan, other countries which had the capability to make nuclear weapons and chose to give up that capability? And if we made a special

exception, what would stop Russia or China from making their own special exceptions. So this was an important issue, more than just a question of theology. The embassy in New Delhi was stridently in favor of granting India special privilege. Ambassador Blackwell would not understand why, in his view, "theologians" like those in NP, didn't just get out of the way. Blackwell had a close relationship the White House and there was constant tension.

Secretary Powell was on the side of doing all that we could to improve ties with India -- short of breaking important international norms. That's what he told the Indian Foreign Minister during a bilateral meeting in Washington -- "We will do everything we can, but we won't break our global commitments." In fact, with the South Asia Bureau, we worked out a roadmap covering relaxation of export controls, and other forms of cooperation that covered most of the substance short of nuclear and ballistic missile cooperation. Indeed, at a distant point, we in NP would even have agreed to drop those prohibitions provided/provided there was benefits so tangible we could use them to defend a treaty breach with our allies and with the non-aligned who really wanted no nuclear weapons states.

The roadmap to which both sides agreed in 2004 foresaw a step-by-step process where India would cap out its development of weapons and weapons materials (fissile material cut-off). In the event they did cap out, and began a process of relaxing tensions with Pakistan (a process that required further definition), we agreed it would be in our interests to step around our global NPT obligations. In 2003-2004, that was the administration's position, and one actually initialed with India. However, in the second Bush term, the administration threw that entire package aside, and negotiated a new "strategic relationship" agreement with none of the rigor of the roadmap -- much to the public consternation of allies and NPT partners (tho' many were probably secretly pleased they now could initiate nuclear commercial deals). Proponents of this deal in Washington foresaw instant commercial gains, and a pliant new strategic partner. The hype to date has far outrun reality.

Q: Was Nick Burns P at the time?

WOLF: Yes.

Q: I believe Nick was very interested in --

WOLF: He was.

Q: He was very interested in that.

WOLF: He was the U.S. negotiator.

Q: He was the negotiator?

WOLF: Yes. From my vantage point, the trajectory of U.S.-Indian relations was such that we should simply have said -- in essence what Colin Powell said -- "This issue -- on this issue we need to agree to disagree." Other people, who knew India better than I do, I suppose, argued that you could never achieve a real breakthrough relationship as long as this impediment was in the way. I believe the U.S. value system, or U.S. interests, are supported by the international commitments that we have made, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty. And the Non-Proliferation Treaty is weakened when one creates these carve-outs with no apparent benefit to the world community. That's why you negotiate international treaties, that's why you stand behind them, that's why you bend as far as you can, but you take care not to break. On the U.S.-India agreement we broke and we got nothing for it. We did it for expediency.

I think President Bush was not well served by the interagency process. He tended to take each issue and deal with it on an *ad hoc* basis. This was just one of many issues I saw where we never reached definitive conclusions. Even when decisions were made by the president, people came back to re-litigate the fight.

There were times too at State where Secretary Powell would make a decision and then we'd see backdoor approaches to the White House to overrule the Secretary. These were an abuse of the process. And it kept us spinning and spinning and spinning when we should have been moving forward. It was especially tough on staff. It certainly led to NP being odd-man out in the T family.

But perhaps we took some perverse pleasure in getting rapped so often by those wielding sticks in T -- get hit enough and you start to think it's pleasurable, but I believe the morale of my bureau was really sky high. I came into the bureau an outsider, but over the three years there we created a very effective team, and I'm extraordinarily proud of all the work they did. I mentioned earlier the Oklahoma final farewell. I was lured on some pretense down to the Loy Henderson Auditorium, where mysteriously my wife had arrived moments before. These were people I spent three years with sort of 24/7. And it was full payoff for the work we had done together. This was my swan at the State Department because I was retiring at the end of that tour. And it was an amazingly uplifting tribute.

Q: But when the secretary said to you, "I'm not hiring you as an expert; I'm hiring you to run the bureau," you had to do some pretty quick retooling. Or at least retooling over time.

WOLF: Well, yes and no. Yes, because there were a lot of issues where I knew absolutely zero -- things like the details of the export regimes, peaceful nuclear cooperation, Nunn-Lugar cooperation with the Russians, etc. But I had a lot of people who could provide expert views. But I wasn't a novice on core non-proliferation areas -- I'd been involved with the Pakistan nuclear questions for 20 years and Iraq episodically for more than ten years. Moreover, my tours in IO provided important grounding for all the multilateral for a in which NP engaged, including both IAEA and the UNSC.

My approach was use the bureau expertise to study up, by hopefully asking the best questions I could, then using my best judgment to make decisions. In NP, as in other tours, the things that I did left some of the detailed follow-up work to others -- I believed in delegating and had excellent deputies. On lots of issues, where policy was clear, they made sure we stayed on course…and where new issues arose, or where there were coordination problems, e.g., where there was truculent obstruction inside the building or in the interagency, they always kept me informed.

This approach was something I'd learned this in Pakistan from Ambassador Hinton - let others have lots of running room but always be there to provide assist or protect where needed. My name was the one on the top of every memo, so where there were policy issues I wanted to be sure I had a say, but within existing policy I needed to trust my deputies to handle many of the daily issues. I think there were very few cases where, when I read something that someone else had signed off for me, I said to myself "Oh, my God. What are they doing?"

Q: When you were in NP you sort of took a little detour on an assignment, didn't you? For Middle East Affairs?

WOLF: So, it was just the Friday before Memorial Day, 2003, and I had played hooky to play golf. I was walking down the first hole when my phone rang. And that was a little bit of heresy. I mean Columbia CC has a pretty strict rule about cell phones. But there weren't many people on the golf course that afternoon and my playing partners had been in government, so --

Q: They understood.

WOLF: They understood. It was Rich Armitage. And I think he knew where I was, but we got past that with only a minor amount of awkwardness. And he said, "The secretary's going to want to talk to you on Tuesday about the Middle East."

I sent the rest of the foursome ahead. I was standing on a hill looking down at the second hole. And I said to him, "The Middle East? I don't even know where that is."

And he said, "Talk to the secretary." End of conversation, he just hung up.

Huh. So now I had a whole weekend to stew. So Tuesday morning, I went in to see the secretary. He explained briefly about the roadmap for peace that was being negotiated and said he had recommended that I head the monitoring mission that was going to be part of the roadmap, phase one of the roadmap. And I said -- I think it was to him, but you know, I said, "Sir, I don't know anything about it! I don't even know where the place is!"

He said, "Talk to Condi."

And so that afternoon I guess off I went to see Dr. Rice. I made a similar point to her and she retorted, "perfect…we're not looking for somebody who's an expert in the Middle East and has all their hang-ups. We're looking for somebody who can look at this with fresh eyes. You're that person."

I recall Powell also had said, said to my "why me?' "Well, you're my junkyard dog."

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: I've never been sure whether that was a compliment. But, I took it as such. It sort of fit, and what was I going to say?

Then she said "I want you to talk to the president.. could you be here at 1:15?" I didn't have to really check my calendar.

Q: Right.

WOLF:. So back at 1:15, and I sat on the couch at right angle to the president who was in one of the chairs. Andy Card, the chief of staff, Dr. Rice and Steve Hadley, also were there. I was petrified. I'd been to the Oval Office once, with Mahathir; this time I was the meeting.

Q: You were the center of attention.

WOLF: Yes, and the president couldn't have been more gracious. He asked something like, "Tell me about yourself."

And stupid me, I started way back in 1970 or something talking about my career. About half-way, "Wait, what are you doing? This is President of the United States." And I cut it real short. He then proceeded to talk for about a five, 10 minutes about his vision, what he saw the roadmap doing, and what he wanted to achieve.

One of his priorities was to work with the Palestinians to establish better institutions capable of advancing the road map…as he put it: "An important part of this is getting the Palestinians to create institutions that are bigger than the people who are running them today." He said, "Look around this office." I'd been much riveted into my position, eyes frozen on him. But I looked around real quickly and he said, "Probably the reason is, sir, because we have the Constitution."

He said, "That's right! Condi, where's the Constitution you working on with the Palestinians?"

"We're working on it, Mr. President." (I thought oh oh, stepped in that one).

Anyway, we talked a little bit more. He said: "We don't want somebody who has all the traditional Middle East expertise, who can look back at past efforts. We want someone to

look forward, somebody who has a vision of how to advance this first stage of getting the Israelis and the Palestinians to work together; you've been suggested."

Well, the meeting ended. It was about 30, 35 minutes. I was wrung out. I went straight back to the secretary's office and said, "I don't think it was a very good job interview."

He said, "Leave it with me." Maybe a day or two later the president was in the Middle East, in Aqaba, and I got a call to see Rich Armitage. He handed me a piece of paper and said, "The president's going to announce this in five minutes," The paper was a copy of the president's remarks including a line saying, "I am sending Ambassador John Wolf to head a U.S. monitoring mission to oversee the implementation of the roadmap."

So a couple of things happened immediately. 1) I needed to do a deep-dive into the roadmap and what it was all about. I had intense discussions with Bill Burns (then NEA's A/S) and company. We had to think about the structure of the monitoring mission and how it was going to work. And 2), I needed to separate myself from NP on a TDY basis. Susan Burk nearly assassinated me before I got a chance to take my chances in the Middle East, because she was left securing ground zero.

Q: She was sort of --

WOLF: Parenthetically, when I came back a couple of, several of months later, Susan's hair was a lot more gray than I had remembered. She told me, "I want them to understand what they're doing to me," *(laughs).*

Anyway, to staff up quickly, I also plucked out two NP people, Joe Pritchard and Rexon Ryu, our Middle East expert in NP/RA. Joe was charged with organizational issues starting with setting up a small office on the side of the consulate general in Jerusalem. He was also to scope out and recruit for the monitoring mission. The days going forward were incredibly intense, and first Rexon and I, soon joined by Joe, were on the ground in less than a week.

I was established in a suite at the Citadel David Hotel, and an office just around the corner at the consulate general. We quickly appropriated a handful of cars, and a pretty significant security team, originally contractors until DS could mobilize a SWAT team for me. In Israel/Jerusalem, we had separate missions to the GOI and to the Palestinians, with an Ambassador in Tel Aviv and Consul General (independent) in Jerusalem (although the two posts liaised quite effectively). I needed to develop my own rapport with both sides, which meant moving back and forth between Jerusalem, Ramallah and Gaza City. No Americans had been into Gaza since the start of the second intifada, and security was a big unknown.

The second or third day that I was in country, Prime Minister Sharon authorized the IAF to fly me over the West Bank and over Gaza, as a way to familiarize myself, but also to show pointedly how small the area was -- and how vulnerable Israel was.

Q: And this is in what year?

WOLF: 2003, June 2003. When I met Sharon a day or so later, and he asked my reactions to what I saw. I said, "I understand what you're saying about small, but the other thing I noticed was there was absolutely no sign of life, economic life, in the Palestinian areas in the West Bank and in Gaza. When you flew over the places were completely shut down." Jerusalem too was desolate after dark. People were afraid, and it showed in the streets. But in the Palestinian areas there was no activity during the day either.

My job wasn't to be Mideast negotiator a la George Mitchell or Tony Zinni. I wasn't focused on a comprehensive peace deal. Over time, the Road Map envisioned two states living together in, in peace and security, but progress (and talks) were to take place in stages. The goal of phase one was simply confidence building. We needed to find ways to get the two sides talking and taking small steps towards greater confidence. We defined a collection of metrics that we would use to see whether there was progress, things like the number of Israeli roadblocks that were disassembled, the level of incitement (hostile public rhetoric) or reduction in terrorist activities in the occupied territories. There were nine metrics and we were going to measure them green, red, yellow, like a traffic light. Everything started red and if there were progress we'd adjust to yellow then green.

At the same time, in Washington, Joe began the process of identifying people to serve as monitors. Our concept was to have people out on the road every day in contact with the Palestinians and the Israelis talking, talking about steps we/they thought could generate greater confidence.

While the president had announced he was sending me, it didn't answer on the ground how I related to all the others who already were part of the U.S. approach to the Middle East. Besides Ambassador Dan Kurtzer in Tel Aviv and CG Jeff Feltman, Dr. Rice, Secretary Powell, Bill Burns, Elliot Abrams, and DAS David Satterfield all had engaged in regular contacts with the parties -- often in person or by phone daily. My part in this complicated, multifaceted situation was even more ambiguous than next steps along the road map. I had really good communications, both classified and open cell. So even when I was on the road I was able to keep in touch. That was pretty great. And we spent a lot of time on those phones because we were always in motion. But it became abundantly clear in those first few days that everybody was still operating the way they had the day before I showed up. While the notes on the song sheet may have been the same, the words each person used were different, and I risked being seen as just a supernumerary.

After this had gone on for a day or two, I called back to Armitage saying, "This can't work. Everybody's talking to everybody." I indicated that sometimes they'd call me before but usually they call afterwards to say what they had said (only infrequently did I get much sense of what the Palestinians were saying -- which is an interesting aside on FS reporting. When I had worked for Deane Hinton, he wanted the cables to read "Ambassador delivered talking points; his interlocutor said -- then all the details. But sometimes visitors from Washington -- Ambassador Oakley was noteworthy in this respect -- would want voluminous detail on what he had said, and only slight reference to

any reply. My interest was more along lines DRH followed, especially since we each tended modify talking points on the fly, to advance the conversation.).

Sometimes I only found out about calls when the Israelis or the Palestinians told me they'd just heard from somebody in Washington, or from Kurtzer or Feldman. I told Rich, "you know, I have a day job (NP), and it's not done yet, so I'd just as soon go back and do my real job..."(Armitage got it and said he'd work the problem). I believe I called Steve Hadley with essentially the same message.

Anyway, things got a lot better really quickly. It wasn't that I planned to work around our local team (Dan Kurtzer was going to forget more about the Middle East than I was ever going to learn). I valued input their input just as I had from Mark Parris when I was doing the Caspian. Jeff Feltman was more junior at the time (he's since gone on to greater things), but he had really solid experience and great contacts with the Palestinians. Chris Stevens was the political officer in Jerusalem at the time, and he was exceptional. Anyway, we established a daily mid-afternoon call (my time), with Burns, Abrams, Kurtzer and Feltman, to coordinate activity. We established who'd be making contact and what points to make…and we also arranged for rapid feedback when others were doing the contacting.

So then we had to find something to do. The first goal was to move the Israelis back in Gaza, not out of Gaza, but back from the main road that bisects Gaza from north to south. At the time, Palestinians in Gaza couldn't move north-south in the enclave. So we facilitated intense negotiations between Israel (mainly its military) and the Palestinians. The goal was to remove the checkpoints and open the enclave to supplies. The Israeli settlements in Gaza were mainly along the coast and weren't the subject of this negotiation.

Negotiating with the Palestinians is only a little easier than negotiating with the Israelis who are almost Talmudic in the detail into which everything lapsed. Before I left for the Middle East, someone had told me that, in the Middle East, part of getting to know someone, building trust relationships, required giving the other person a chance to tell his/her story. And, on both sides, they loved to tell their stories, and with me they had a rookie. And so they talked, and talked, and talked. I heard these tales over and over.

My principal interlocutor in Israel was Dov Weissglass, the PM's chief of staff. Weissglass, a lawyer by trade, who could be alternately humorous, cynical, sarcastic, and often cantankerous…but for sure he was a great storyteller…and what he said not only was interesting, it generally led to a point. But listening took a lot of time and patience, not one of my best-known qualities. On the other side, the Palestinians' lead negotiator, Saeb Erekat, had been doing Middle East negotiations since before Moses I think and he used to tell me the history of every point in the discussions.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: And so I spent a lot of time those first couple weeks just listening -- over and over and over, but we got talks going and I remember we finally got to a climactic negotiating session shortly after Secretary Powell's visit, where he had helped tee up our talks. Dr. Rice was coming out on a Saturday night. We were negotiating on the Friday, prior to the start of Sabbath, when everything in Israel comes to a standstill. We were at the Intercontinental Hotel in Tel Aviv. The banter across the table was, on the one hand friendly, but on the other hand very pointed. These people knew each other very well… "I arrested your father 20 years ago, I can arrest you too," *(laughs)* that sort of thing…but the two sides seemed miles apart on substance. I was sitting with my back to the window, (maybe not the smartest place) and the sun was sinking down into the Mediterranean right behind me. I could see the shadows growing longer, literally and figuratively. I warned both sides, "The sun is going to go down and the next sound you're going to hear will be Dr. Rice's heels clicking across the Ben-Gurion Airport terminal. And you don't want to have to tell her that you don't have an agreement." That seemed to work, we actually agreed to suspend sunset for an hour and a half (it got well and truly dark outside), but by 9:30 or 10:00 they finally reached agreement on disengagement.

Q: But you were asking the Israelis to pull back from the -- what were you asking the Palestinians to do?

WOLF: I forget the details; surely it had to do with controlling the northern part of Gaza -- from where Hamas launched rockets, and to help maintain order. It was a quite detailed arrangement.

Reaching agreement though was huge. A week later during my weekly call from Dr. Rice, I reported that there had been a noticeable change on the streets in Gaza and in Jerusalem. In Gaza City, stores were staying open late into the night, and children were playing in the street" which meant their parents were willing to let them out of the house. In Jerusalem, the restaurants were again open and people were out late at night. I thought this was *huge*….things turned so much better, like a light switch had turned on confidence. A small step in a long process, but a forward step. (I had a mobile secure voice phone for these calls, and I intentionally would sit outside on my patio because I knew the Israelis had my room monitored, and I assume they had the porch monitored. It made it easy for 'em to hear what I had to say, but only I heard Condi on the STU-III phone.)

Meanwhile, and following up on President Bush's points re Palestinian "institution building," we were talking to Finance Minister Salam Fayyad and other Palestinian ministers about institution building. Fayyad was targeting corruption in the various payment systems, and was thinking big. One area he where he asked for help was in release of customs receipts, which the Israelis had impounded during the Intifada. That went on Embassy Tel Aviv's to do list, and they got it done. We also had conversations with the minister of information about incitement, removing distorted references to Israel and Judaism, and toning down the fiery and tendentious rhetoric on officially sponsored Palestinian radio and TV stations. Incitement was one of our metrics of progress…and we made some small inroads, at least initially.

Another issue with government of Israel was the pervasive checkpoints all across the West Bank. This was in the context of concerns we heard from ordinary citizens about the inconvenience, but also from the business community, which described how the dislocations caused by the checkpoints were a serious disincentive for investment and employment generation. Not only was it difficult to get goods to market but, even for the workers, they might have to travel 20-30 miles to accomplish what should have been a commute of only a couple miles. They railed too about the uncertainty that Arafat still caused…and when I asked they didn't talk to him directly they looked at me like I was crazy. "Go tell Arafat? No, no, no, we want to wake up alive tomorrow."

During July we had daily discussions with both sides about further incremental steps. This included several trips to Jericho to meet with Saeb Erekat, including at least two lunches -- his wife was a fabulous hostess, the food was incredibly good, and, while my team was small, Joe and Rexon ensured that our presence was felt at the table.

There are lots of vignettes, I'm sure, but a couple that I recall included one where we had just finished the nightly buffet that the hotel set in its upstairs lounge. Walking back to the elevator, another guest stopped me to say: "Ambassador Wolf, hello, I'm Robert Kraft and I'm sure jealous of the job you are doing…" I think I was quick enough witted to respond, Mr. Kraft, I'm jealous of yours too, but I think I was too slow to say let's trade (he owned the Boston Patriots). Another was the regular visit I made across the street to get an ice-cream bar. Every time I said I wanted ice cream, my security detail scurried to secure the street and the store and to scope out the ice-box. I'm not making light of it; they were professionals; they had a dangerous job; and I (my family and I) was deeply grateful for their commitment. Indeed, later that fall, when I was back for consultations, I was awaken by the Op Center, only to be informed that Israel Radio had just reported I was killed during by a bomb aimed at my motorcade in Gaza. I was alive, but a couple of the security contractors who had been with me at the start of the mission were killed. We were deeply touched.

At the end of July, both PM Sharon and PM Abbas were invited for visits to the WH. They provided an interesting juxtaposition. Both the US and Israeli side had large teams that crowded in the Oval Office, but the conversation of course was just between the president and pm. President Bush pressed the PM hard on reducing checkpoints and avoiding locating a new "security fence" on land that further encroached into Palestinian territory. Sharon had a technique of working from a script his staff had prepared, and he tended to go from front to back. However, President Bush kept hectoring him on the president's key points…"what about the checkpoints, Ari…what about the fence…" and Sharon was constantly off-footed -- he'd go back to page one and start again. In any fair evaluation of the meeting, it was clear Bush had the upper hand -- as I suspect usually is the case in a WH meeting. But, after this very tough meeting, the two went out arm in arm to meet the press, and the whole conversation was about what the Palestinians needed to do to advance peace. In the public battle, the Israelis got everything they wanted, and needed.

The president really pressed too on the Palestinians…to curb terrorism. The president was gracious but insistent. However, what we wanted, and what the Palestinian Authority could deliver, were quite different. I was there for both meetings, and during the second one even got a "hello Wolfie" from the president.

In August, 2003, I was in the U.S. on the way to a family wedding in the Caribbean. En route, I had consultations in Washington, including at the Pentagon with JCS Chairman, General Myers. Just as I entered his suite, CNN was carrying a story about a bus bombing in Jerusalem. This was the first of several bombings done by rejectionists in the Palestinian camp who aimed also to "blow up" the Road Map initiative. General Myers' first question to me was: "When are you going back?" That night as it turns out.

So began one of the more frustrating two or three months between August, I think it was August 20,th and the end of October when I retreated from Jerusalem. When I arrived at Ben Gurion airport the next day, the Israelis had mobilized along the Gaza border. Hamas was rocketing southern Israel, and the whole situation was about to ignite. I talked throughout the day with Dov Weissglass and with the military, then with Mohammed Dahlan, who was the Palestinian Authority's military political commander in Gaza. Dahlan made a variety of commitments; the Israelis dismissed his promises with distain…but they didn't attack. The discussions continued well into the night, with Dahlan boosting of what he was doing, and Weissglass just laughing (at me) saying, "Give me a break…none of that's happening."

Next day, Dov tells me, "Do you know their description of moving troops…Know what they did…??" They commandeered a (one) taxi." He was so dismissive…but they didn't invade.

Still, negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority withered rapidly and ended once there were additional bombings, including at a restaurant in Haifa a few days before Mahela and I visited Haifa for dinner with Avi Dichter, Director of Shin Bet. Dichter told us about the Haifa restaurant bombing in which a 19 or 20-year-old young mother of several children dined at the restaurant, paid for her meal, then went over to stand next to an Israeli family just before she exploded her bomb. Frankly, I couldn't comprehend the desperation or ideology that drove people to such acts. But this is what we were dealing with -- rejectionists determined to untrack a process that had provided a modicum of progress and relief to people who were struggling. It would be too charitable to say the terrorists were merely disappointed with the pace of progress…I suppose they envisioned a whole different Palestine -- one without Israel.

With events on the ground slowing, Joe Pritchard's wife, Chris, and Mahela visited Israel in September. We took a day to visit the Galilee area, and I have two treasured pictures from the Church of the Beatitudes, where Jesus reportedly delivered the Sermon on the Mount. There's a bench there in front of a wall inscribed, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." I have two photos, one with Mahela and one with Joe…and I'd choose those photos as a pictorial epithet for my professional life.

In the event, growing turmoil in the region quickly quashed any optimism, or sense of commitment in Washington. It was evident by October that the White House had moved on to other, new opportunities. I went back to Washington then back and forth a couple of times to Israel and Palestine. But by the end of the year the road had played out. Eventually I went to the secretary to indicate I no longer was adding value and asked to be reactivated in my day job. The bureau welcomed me back enthusiastically. And Susan was ecstatic.

Q: This is at the end of '03?

WOLF: Yes. I spent most of the next months concentrating on AQ Khan.

Looking back for a moment institutionally at the ME, there's a constant debate about czars and special representatives…the current State Department has at least several dozen, -- more, and people complain the practice distorts and undercuts the department. Based on my two experiences, I disagree.

Control was there. On the ME, Secretary Powell was very good about my having in essence two masters, telling me only, "I never want to hear from Condi Rice something that you've told her before you've told me." So sort of religiously ever night before I went to bed I'd send him an email -- to his AOL account -- which he would get first thing in the morning even before he got to the department. I'd update him on what was happening, and in general where I was going. My messages weren't classified, so were always a bit elliptic. I used classified cables for more sensitive matters and my daily secure telcon with Burns and Abrams. I had generally had one weekly call with Dr. Rice.

Also, when she came to Israel on that visit in late June/early July, Dr. Rice did something which, in a way, was uncomfortable but on the other hand really helped me out a lot. She had a couple of meetings which were in essence one-on-ones. And one-on-ones were one plus note taker. And where she did that I was the one in the meetings, including once or twice on the Israeli side. That left out Dan Kurtzer, but he was a true professional, didn't complain, and I backfilled him on all the details and color of the meeting. The implied point was that I was the WH's person.

There was another time the signaling worked. Mahela and I were having dinner with the Weissglasses in Herzliya one evening. At about nine or so, my phone rang, and I looked down. Seeing White House Signal's number, I excused myself and went off to talk with Dr. Rice. She was calling me to say that she was about to call Weissglass and did I have anything I wanted her to say. I said, "Well, fancy that…I'm having dinner with him right now. Here are two or three things that it would be good for you to reinforce." Weissglass asked when I got back to the table, "Am I in trouble?"

I said to him, "Don't know, but you'll probably find out." Just then his phone rang, he answered and, after a moment, asked if he could return the call in half and hour. Sure enough, it was Dr. Rice.

I don’t say this to brag, but rather to stress how it gave our efforts a bit of momentum. If Dr. Rice cared about it, my interlocutors could deduce President Bush was interested, as was the case on BTC with Sandy Berger on President Clinton’s behalf. The other side listened a little more carefully because it wasn't just John Wolf speaking. I was speaking on behalf of the president. More importantly, they inferred what they said would get back to the WH directly. That’s why, too, after the bombings in the late summer, when it was clear the WH attention had shifted, it also became quickly clear that people stopped listening/engaging with the road map process. And by October the air was out of the balloon.

Q: So you went back to NP.

WOLF: After Christmas, 2003. I retired in July 2004.

Q: Well, let’s pick it up next time. Today is December 18th, 2014. We’re resuming the conversation with Ambassador John Wolf. John, looking back on your career, how would you sum things up?

WOLF: So I took some time to think about this. I was back in KL sometime shortly after retirement, and met somebody from the private sector who was in KL when I was ambassador. We were talking about my career, and he said, “Yours sounds like a poster career.” I suppose reflecting back it was; I was very fortunate. And I’ve tried to describe some of the things that were exciting. But for me -- and I thought it was important - -the Foreign Service wasn't just a job. And it wasn't even just a profession. It was an adventure. And even more it was a calling, an opportunity to provide genuine service. That always was a central organizing principle. It was the little things and the big things. As a junior officer, it was the adoption that I mentioned, where I helped an American family. I didn't realize the impact until 20 years later, but it certainly was emotionally satisfying when I heard how the story had played out. In T it was, it was the integrated foreign assistance process we innovated. But it wasn’t just the allocations themselves, the numbers. It was what Princeton Lyman had told me, that we shouldn’t just be moving around numbers, but rather allocating with the awareness that under each number there were programs with an impact on people.

As a junior officer it’s sometimes hard at the bottom of the pyramid to think that one is really having an impact, but one can. But if one looks for opportunities, and makes them where they don’t exist, quite often one will make that difference. Looking back, I know I couldn’t have charted my path from FSI in Roslyn in August/September of 1970 to Baku-Ceyhan, Malaysia, the Middle East and as assistant secretary for non-proliferation. I know I wasn’t the smartest one in my entering class, and my language skills, maybe even in English!, weren’t the best of group. But, along my way in the FS, I had super mentors, great bosses, and some superb people with whom I worked, and in due course on whom I came to rely to help us move matters forward. I worked hard; I had a drive. I wasn't shy about going outside the formal system in order to get things done. That included the personnel system and most of my mid-career assignments came through people who asked for me as opposed to my just bidding for specific assignments. Certainly contacts

on the Seventh Floor helped me to get my Malaysian posting. Under the current political correctness, I might not ever have been considered because I'd never set foot in the country and I didn't speak Bahasa. But what we did during my three years there still is yielding benefits. On non-proliferation, Colin Powell said he didn't choose me for my knowledge, but for to exercise leadership in the bureau. I surrounded myself with really bright people, and empowered them. We worked together as a team. They gave me their best advice and I made choices, often taking their advice but sometimes following my instincts. And again, beyond Iraq, we had a number of major successes.

Part of my progression up in the ranks was, I suppose, being in the right place at the right time…even though there may have been someone somewhere else "more right" for the job...but the lightning hit me and I performed. And performance, demonstrated ability to get things done, was a springboard to the next levels.

As I told you, Ken, I was sitting in front of a group of young FSO's as their mentor and I could see in their eyes they already were trying to plot their career from junior officer to assistant secretary. I told them it doesn't work that way…. the route is too unpredictable. But I assured them that at some point they'd come to a deep abysses, knowing they needed to get to the other side. "Imagine a rope and jump." I faced that situation a couple times, and jumped, and fortunately never hung my self with the rope.

The second thing I recalled was a call from my son in 2004-2005. He had just passed the Foreign Service written exam. He had never given the slightest hint to me that he was thinking of it. And so I was confronted with this, "What would I recommend to my son? Is this a career I would recommend to my son" because I certainly had recommended it to a number of people who'd come to me over the last 10, 15 years? I had told them it was a wonderful opportunity to serve. And I, and if I had the decision to make all over again I would do it, I would have done it. But would I do it now? Would I recommend the same to my son? In the event, my son didn't go on to the oral exams; he took another job in San Francisco, and things have worked out splendidly.

I still get the question from potential new diplomats. My answer now is probably more nuanced. I tell them I'd do what I did all over again in a heartbeat, but the circumstances for them going forward will be much different for them than they were for me forty-five years ago. Today, conducting foreign policy is more complicated abroad and more complicated at home.

The risks are palpably greater and more diffuse, though my world wasn't without its risk. They shot rockets in our direction in Vietnam; and it was SOP in Athens every morning to look under our car for bombs (and it was sobering during a coup to be driving up Queen Sophia Blvd to the embassy when a tank pointed its cannon at me). When I was in the Middle East, I was protected by a cocoon of very talented, armed security people. Today, though, the threats are more 24/7, risk-mitigation policies have impacted officers' ability to do their jobs, and more families face restricted environments abroad, or must endure separated assignments.

When we were in Pakistan, the perceived threat was minimal. Today? Officers can't go anywhere without an escort. That robs jobs of part of what was so enjoyment –sojourns in the Punjab, Frontier Province and Baluchistan -- traveling to villages and meeting all kinds of people. I think of pros like Frank Ricciardone -- he won the reporting award for puissant messages he did after wondering the alleys of Cairo -- engaging with shopkeepers, tradesmen, and political organizers. He, too, relished the "adventure" that he was on, and the opportunities he could create by doing his job.

Today, the discussion is how to manage risk, and the enterprise (with constant harping from Congress and the 24/7 news talkies) is less being prepared to take risk -- even prudently. In diplomacy, as in business innovation, risk-taking is a part of working towards success, but it brings with it the risk of failures. In today's world, is risk-taking rewarded, or is it penalized?

The second thing I would say is that Washington, where I had some of my best assignments, is not fun. Congress is polarized; there's a gotcha approach in Hill-Administration relations, and even inside administrations there's been a polarization that makes the interagency process near toxic. When I was in NP, every day seemed a near death experience -- much more dangerous than dealing with foreign countries. This partisanship toxicity that has been introduced into the DNA at State, in the interagency, and between the executive and Congress, is the kind that inhibits free expression and limits alternative viewpoints. It's my way or the highway. People today complain about the do-nothing Congress; in my time it was the do-nothing administration, where people intentionally threw sand in the gears to prevent policies that they opposed. I found that to be distasteful and difficult to live with. I used to wake up at nights not worried by impending world events, but angry over something that had happened or was about to happen in the interagency. It's one of the reasons why in 2004 I was happy to exit to Eisenhower Fellowships. EF worked with leaders whose core motivation was "bettering the world around them" and the work they did had real impact.

There's much talk today about the enhanced role of the NSC, at the expense of the State Department -- and I suspect one would hear the same at Defense and CIA. Clearly some of that is new, but we shouldn't forget how Henry Kissinger drove events in the Nixon administration, from his seat at the NSC. And I'd be remiss not to recall the "clout" I got in Baku-Ceyhan and the Roadmap derived directly by the visible tie I had to the NSC and White House.

So things have changed, but perhaps not as much as people allege. There likely are many reasons why the conduct of foreign policy seems less coherent today than it was say forty years ago. Probably, it was never laser focused, but then there were fewer "urgent" issues -- issues that compelled top levels, and there certainly were far fewer players -- in Washington or abroad. And every twist and turn in the road wasn't endlessly dissected by Fox News and MSNBC. Today, there are many players and many, many, "priorities." One of my EF trustees told me an organization could have only five priorities, 'cause people only have five fingers to count them." But I suspect that if you stopped three officers on any floor in the building and asked them what are the department's or what

are the secretary's three or five highest priorities, you might get six different answers. Secretary Clinton's QDDR (Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review) had something like 43 priorities. Forty-three priorities is a lot like no priorities.

We had that problem twenty years earlier, too. In T, people would always come running up to me with the latest Presidential Decision Memorandum, demanding I find the money needed to fund it. I used to open up my drawer and pull out like a handful such memoranda and ask so "what do I do about these?"… How do I choose which one to take the money from to give it to you?" But we had a process to make choices and generally did (albeit in a time of rising resources). It's incredibly harder to make choices when resources are shrinking.

Another thing about the broken bureaucracy…there were times when State was under strong leadership with direct ties to the President…Kissinger, Shultz, and especially Jim Baker. They drove the process interagency, and within State. That's been missing the past several decades.

One more thing, we talked about risk taking. I'm a bit removed from the FS selection process, but I wonder whether the test process adequately shifts for the three or four key characteristics that make a successful FSO. Especially, how does the process assess gumption, passion, innovativeness and entrepreneurship, including the willingness to take risks.

And, finally, there is the question of accountability. I'm not certain there's a standard of accountability in the state department akin say to that in the military or business. It seems that, more often, the system finds one relatively senior person, maybe it's April Glaspie for Iraq War 1, Mary Ryan after September 11, or Eric Boswell for Benghazi and pins blame there. In those cases, you will not be able to convince this humble observer that responsibility didn't run much higher. I realize this cuts both ways; perhaps I should have been held more accountable for my part in miscuing the WMD questions for Iraq.

Q: What stands out in regards to your achievements?

WOLF: So at Eisenhower Fellowships I used to ask fellows what were their wow moments. Wow moments weren't necessarily seeing the governor of a state or the chief executive officer of a big corporation, or a Nobel Prize winner at Stanford. I wanted Fellows to think about those events or people whom they'd recall in 20-30 years when they sat around the campfire describing who or what had had a significant impact in their career, or life, path. I've jotted down a few, starting with the young kid who bounded up the airplane steps to brief Adm. Zumwalt. What was significant for me was the trust my consul had invested in me -- recall he had initially opposed my assignment, wanting someone more senior. And it was the fact that Zumwalt listened intently, took "my" guidance, and fixed the problem. Same kid six months later, with Mahela, awaiting Secretary of State Rogers and party. We had put all the requested preparations in place, ourselves -- well with the help of my Wednesday afternoon West Australia club buddies (who happened to run things in Western Australia). And the visit went great, except that

several members of the party got food poisoning (and I ended up in Vietnam a couple months later -- not related I trust). We did the work, 'cause there was no one else, and what needed to be done got done.

Q: (laughs

WOLF: I've mentioned the Vietnam adoption case, but it wasn't until 20 years later that I realized the positive impact I'd had for that family… I also "learned the ropes" getting a lasso around the several hundred contractors who came to MR-1 after the VN ceasefire. In the process, I worked myself out of a job, but I learned something about managing complex relationships, and sorting out problems.

In Greece, I was really junior, but I managed to create for myself a ringside seat where I could learn to appreciate the complexities of policy formulation -- the rivalry between Embassies Athens and Ankara, and the sometimes-opaque hand of Washington. Certainly, it was exhilarating to be U/S Sisco's staff for 24 hours at the denouement of tensions between Turkey and Greece, and I didn't even mind the pencil he whizzed by my ear when I relayed the WH reply that they could get Dr. Kissinger to call in from a service station, if someone had a quarter.

The 26-week economics course and subsequent mid-career economics studies changed my career path -- economists think in models, and economic has assumptions and variables, a lot like policy deliberations. That was really useful, and led me to think econ officers could do most any work in the FS; I wasn't sure political officers had the same skills! The two economic courses also opened up new assignment possibilities that would have been hard for me in the consular cone. In IO/AGR, Paul Byrnes was a wise mentor, gave me incredible insights and latitude, and gave me the chance often to take the seat, behind the brass sign reading "United States of America." There's something special, the exhilaration and responsibility, that seat gave. One really had a sense of helping, in a small way, to advance U.S. national interests. The decision that came from a WFP plenary to name me chair of the reporting committee was a great honor, coming as it did from a variety of DC and LDC ambassadors who agreed to work with a very junior FSO.

Back for a moment to the training thing, I never thought I had enough training opportunities, or I didn't take advantage of enough training opportunities that were there. Looking at the military, when they weren't fighting wars, they were training. And if you look at people at flag rank, almost all have had several graduate level training cycles. Certainly, too, at the State Department, we need to think more strategically about training our future leaders, including in leadership. I had some remarkable bosses from whom I learned on the job, people like Jim Buckley who took me along to Pakistan, then empowered me to lead the integrated budget process. Buckley was unflappable, but wasn't shy leaning in to pursue his policy points.

Bill Schneider taught me so much about Congress, the appropriations process, and the backroom politicking one needed to do to advance one's agenda. Deane Hinton was truly

one of my lodestones –he was a fearless leader, a tough boss, sometimes petulant, but in the same way he expected loyalty, he gave it -- to every person in his mission.

I've talked mostly about personalities, but certainly that first, 1981 trip to Pakistan was of formidable importance in shaping my career. I spend over twenty years on and off working on things related to Pakistan, and especially their nuclear program. Going to Pakistan in 1981 with Jim Buckley, we opened up a new chapter. Doesn't read quite as well 30 years later, but it was an important chapter for U.S. -- Pakistan relations, and an important factor in my career going forward. In T, the integrated budget process, which I shepherded, we sought to rectify budgets which had seemed to often to work at cross-purposes -- AID development assistance was done in isolation from the economic support funds (and military assistance). This is all the taxpayer's monies and they ought to be advancing our foreign policy interests, irrespective whether that that is security related or developmental in nature.

In IO, my second time around (as PDAS), it was the First Gulf War; we crafted many of the key resolutions sitting around my coffee table. The campaign to repeal the Zionism is Racism resolution, 3379, was a huge WOW. And, pursuing the "unitary UN" that Bolton had conceived meant we were advancing consistent U.S. interests across the system -- not done before we started.

In Malaysia, my strategic imperative was to demonstrate America worthy to be a friend and uniquely able to provide international leadership. The FA-18 sale was a key to unlocking so many opportunities, and the Mahathir visit to Washington was transformational. I like to refer to the aircraft sale not just for the aircraft sold or the new strategic relationship it helped initiate, but because of that moment I witnessed in St. Louis when several hundred of the workers who had made the first plane crowded around it to admire it, and relish their role in its manufacture. That really hit home. We created this opportunity where the opportunity didn't exist.

Visits by high-level people, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Jack Welch were good not simply because of their star power. What they did was to project the best of America, and advanced that vision of demonstrating America's uniqueness. I cannot overstate how privileged my family and I were to have hosted special guests like Secretaries Shultz and Kissinger, and Jack Welch. But there were many more, including in due course a number of Senators, often led by Senator Cohen from Maine.

There were so many special things we got to do in Malaysia due to my assignment. Certainly our three years there had a lasting impact on my children. Stephen was just in Southeast Asia in 2014, and went back to the residence. Some of the staff is still there. The house looks a little different, but he was able to show his new bride where he had lived and grown up. Both my children still have their friends from KL now all over the world with whom they keep in touch on Facebook.

I suppose this is the right time to mention the critically important role that Mahela played from Perth right through to Malaysia. And, certainly on the overseas assignments, she

was a co-partner in helping to represent the United States and helping to sustain missions. Wherever we were, she was that strong force inside the family when I was preoccupied with work and traipsing all over the world, sometimes too often preoccupied or traipsing, but this was part of my career and part of the reflection.

APEC didn't have so many wow moments, but I suppose in recognition of what we were doing in APEC and certainly what we had done in Malaysia, the American Chambers of Commerce, Asia Pacific gave me APCAC Award in 1996, an award they gave one person in government whom they felt had significantly advanced American business in the Asia Pacific For me, being attentive to the U.S. business community whether as exporters or investors was an important responsibility but it also helped provided positive leverage and energy in many of the policy matters we were trying to advance.

Baku-Ceyhan was a WOW. There were thrilling moments, especially trailing President Clinton into the signing ceremony where we witnessed the signing of key framework documents. But even more moving was the opening ceremony at Ceyhan six years later. It was appropriate that the first tanker loaded was the "Liberty," because indeed the pipeline did create new opportunities for Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.

The Road Map process was a wow (small letters), I suppose since there I was, the "small town" boy from Wyncote, PA working to advance peace in the Middle East. It was a long haul from that first assignment to a Perth (which in my JO class got a number of votes for worst assignment -- wrong). And the Gaza disengagement did, qualitatively, improve peoples' lives…if only for a time.

In NP, well the wow was avoiding a WMD follow on to September 11; we couldn't afford to get it wrong. It is really hard to recreate the anxiety of, of 2002/2003, so while disagreeing with torture I empathize somewhat with the pressure Agency interrogators must have felt. And in the run-up to the Iraq War, it was incredibly hard to ignore all the reports, many of which accurately described actual purchases of suspect technologies and materials. I ask myself often, "How could we have done a better job in NP… penetrating into the intelligence to catch the inconsistencies or duplicity?" I don't have an answer.

The nuclear dialogue with General Kidwai was important. It related not only to nuclear security in Pakistan but to our own national interests. Perhaps we didn't get *a lot* done by some people's count, but I think we focused the Pakistanis on some things that they needed to do and others that we could do together incrementally. And it did provide an opportunity to talk about AQ Khan whom they did push out of their own nuclear establishment.

Being part of the posse that eventually helped disassemble the Khan proliferation network not only advanced national security, but it was also was a satisfying denouement for my work over twenty plus years, work I'd done in Pakistan and NEA in the eighties, then in P, and again when I came back in NP. His network was a bit like bamboo, and we needed to be sure we applied "round up" to all the root fibers.

And finally I think of NP and the terrific team we had. It was a bit like operating in a blast furnace on one of America's most significant, and controversial, subjects. I talked about the sort of poisonous atmosphere of the interagency and intradepartmental politics, and NP was right in the middle, indeed we felt at times like we were the bulls-eye. But inspectors who inspected the bureau just as I was retiring praised the bureau and spoke about strong leadership and high morale. I was moved by the staff's theatrical send-off.

Q: Tell us about it.

WOLF: The Foreign Service is mostly about people. You don't make widgets. You do things, sure, but mostly it's a lot about people. And so, for me, this 34 years was just a special opportunity to be with great people within the department, people I'd not have met had I not made the fateful decision in August of 1970 to pass on Navy OCS and to throw my lot in with the scallywags in the State Department.

Q: Well, you touched on a couple I think, but what about disappointments?

WOLF: I don't tend to linger long on such matters -- the way I work intellectually I suppose I'm grouchy for a few moments, but then move on.

As I think about each one of our assignments, you know, were there disappointments? To be sure, the Iraq part of my NP tour was -- and remains -- a disappointment. Over a decade latter, we're still mired in Iraq, and the consequences for lives there and here and the costs are staggering. And if WMD was the rationale for war, certainly the war did not need to be. That hurts.

The fairly unproductive results from the Road Map are disappointing, but not entirely surprising given how intractable the issues. We worked to try to help the sides turn the page, and when the rug was swept out from under the process, that was disappointing but the real impact is still playing out in the region. Eleven years later hundreds of people have died, another decade has been lost.

I think maybe the other disappointment has to do with the loss of momentum, the partisanship, and the polarization that now is part of the national ethos. When I was in Pakistan, and at other posts, I talked to people about what it took to be a successful democracy. I'd often do that pointing to our experiences over two hundred plus years. I would point to our Constitution and the rule of law, to risk-taking and innovation, and lots of other things that were part of America's success. I don't think I could do that credibly now. I would consider that a disappointment. And as a taxpayer, a father, and now a grandfather, one looks at the situation now and worries a lot about the uncertainties that seem to be multiplying. They all have their costs and consequences, and it's not a great inheritance that we pass on now to the next and future generations.

Q: There's a debate today, it's gone on for a long time in terms of managing our diplomacy. How might we organize to achieve a more coherent and structured --

WOLF: We discussed that briefly. The issue now is the dominant role the NSC plays -- it's a bit like the role that one sees for S/P within State. Each was created in a staff position. Each has taken on an operational characteristic.

A lot has changed in the nearly seventy years since the NSC was created. Back then there were only a few agencies, and the Secretary of State was undoubtedly first among equals. Fast forward, two of the most successful secretaries of state in the larger sense were Henry Kissinger and George Shultz. Each had either a personal relationship and/or clout with the president. Colin Powell was great for the institution in terms of leading the building. But he didn't have the clout with President Bush that, e.g., Kissinger had with Nixon. And that made his tenure so much more difficult.

I suspect more than the institutional rivalry, the defining question is whether a president appoints as secretary of state someone whom he/she really empowers. I wonder actually whether that's possible given that there's a lot less clear delineation between the tools of national diplomacy, and the decisions have to be made by the President. Things worked well, even in times of war, when State was led by someone like Jim Baker who could simply phone the president, then send me a note saying, "Do it this way, I've checked with the president." But the Bush/Baker relationship was *sui generis*. In the Bush II administration, even when the president had decided an issue, there was still room for reclamas from the VP and Rumsfeld. That said, I think the department needs to pull up its socks a little bit on the way in which the Civil Service and Foreign Service operate, and the way in which people come into the system.

We have a problem when one third of FSOs have been in the service less than 10 years. And we also have a problem when a significant number of FSOs think the Civil Service is second tier.

Certainly there continues to be a serious deficiency in training, including acceptance that training is a key part of professionalism -- not simply time off from real work. I had almost no training after my Princeton "mid-career" year. That would have been inconceivable in the military.

Q: In your own management, you referred once in the conversation to yourself being mercurial. I think you might have used impatient at one point, I'm not sure. And you said that Colin Powell referred to you as his junkyard dog. Let's review that. How did that affect your approach to things and was it for good or for ill and --

WOLF: I puzzled whether "junk-yard dog" was praise or subtle criticism (not so subtle). In the context, though, it seemed to fit -- lean forward, don't take (too much) bs…I'll admit to restlessness with long windedness and circumlocution. I tended to be results oriented, and was willing to work an issue within and outside the system -- that helped in heading off USTR's effort to remove Malaysia's GSP, and it was crucial in lighting the fire inside the administration necessary to get the F/A-18 deal done. As I said a few weeks ago, I eschewed the title "problem solver" favoring instead looking for

opportunities…but work in NP was rarely anything other than problem solving, or managing problems that didn't have a solution.

Going back to what we discussed earlier, about criteria for FSO selection, if the test for incoming Foreign Service officers is simply can one prioritize and work through the in-basket given the time available, I suppose I wonder whether that's the right test? Because in a way, some of the most effective people I know are people who threw the in-basket out and went out and created opportunities. That was certainly our approach every day in Malaysia. I was never shy there about pushing back…and I wasn't afraid to pick up the phone. I learned that the title ambassador gets a lot of people at least to take the call. But that only works the second time when they know you have something important to say.

Q: Yeah (laughs).

WOLF: Certainly, there was a lot of barnyard scuffling when I was in NP, and probably a bit of barnyard language as well…I got especially animated when I saw people trying to bully my staff -- it wasn't just John Bolton -- some of his junior staffers and cohorts in other agencies felt they had sanction to ream out our people. That didn't go unchallenged when Deane Hinton was ambassador to Pakistan, and it didn't go unchallenged when I was the A/S for NP.

Secretary Powell joked at my retirement that he wanted people around him who would give him their points of view. He said, "But then I expected that when I made a decision that they would salute and march forward." And then he said something about, "However, John Wolf didn't always do that. He might be back the next morning...but with a new perspective -- which sometimes caused me to change my mind." But I only did that, as his book said, if I had new reasons or a different line of thought. Sometimes we thought we had arguments that he might not have considered that he wanted him to consider. It wasn't cart blanche to march in there whenever. That would have been foolish. But sometimes that was just what one had to do.

Q: In other circumstances were you sort of known as a contrarian?

WOLF: Perhaps.

Q: (laughs) That's not necessarily a bad thing. OK, so you retired as assistant secretary for non-proliferation and you became president of Eisenhower Fellowships.

WOLF: I did.

Q: How did that come about and when are we talking now, what year?

WOLF: That was the summer of 2004. So how did it come about? I had known -- Adrian Basora who was my predecessor at EF. It's not axiomatic that a diplomat heads Eisenhower Fellowships. His predecessor was the president of Swarthmore. My successor was chief editor of The Chicago Tribune. But I had been in Philadelphia to

make a speech and Adrian had mentioned he headed Eisenhower Fellowships. I was on an airplane flying to Europe reading The Economist and this was at a time when I was starting to think about if not the State Department, then what? So I religiously used to read the weekly ads for policy positions that are in printed version of The Economist.

Q: The hard copy, yeah.

WOLF: It doesn't show up online. And I saw one little tiny box advertising for the presidency of Eisenhower Fellowships. And I thought about it and I wrote to get the information from the search firm. And then I thought about it some more and thought, "Well, what the heck?" I threw my hat in the ring, was interviewed and then interviewed again. After a third interview I had the job. I found my time at EF was like the Foreign Service in that it was a chance it was a chance to work with truly remarkable people all over the world, and to provide service. EF Fellows include people all the way back to Suleyman Demirel, Turkey's past president, who was a Fellow in 1954 and another in Turkey who was my Baku-Ceyhan counterpart from the Ministry of Energy. I met many others whom I knew from business, NGO's and government.

Fellows are chosen for their demonstrated accomplishments in whatever their field of endeavor, and for their potential to rise to positions of national or international prominence. Their program during 6-7 weeks travel in the US introduces them to leaders in their field, as a way to exchange skill insights, to expand their networks and, importantly, to give them time on fellowship to advance specific ideas/innovations that they will implement when they return to their home countries. EF is not an academic study sabbatical…really it's more practical, and results (or outcomes) oriented. An important element of the program is building ties to other Fellows in their own cohorts as well as Fellows who had been through the program previously. An EF Fellowship isn't time limited; it's a life-long identify, and we had an expectation that the engagement post-program would actually be the most valuable part of any fellowship, with Fellows who shared a passion working together and leveraging their own skills and networks. EF's mantra was "leaders bettering the world around them."

When one looks at how people who met through Eisenhower Fellowships and who have found ways to help others in Eisenhower Fellowships, I think it shows the power of the brand. I spent a lot of my time not just trying to find remarkable people, but also in creating more and more engagement in that lifetime experience. Because there are 2,000 Eisenhower fellows, or the better part of 2,000 Fellows now, there is a critical mass in probably 50 countries around the world. And with the Internet, social networking, etc., communications and continued contact is so much easier. The idea of Fellows working with Fellows to an impact is intoxicating. It's what I came to see my career was supposed to have been, trying to have an impact. Sometimes small, sometimes large, working with other people to leverage my own skills and theirs.

Q: How were they chosen, the Fellows?

WOLF: The Fellows are chosen through nominating committees in each country. The nominating countries are made up of some combination of people who are Eisenhower Fellows who have been through the program, as well as prominent people in their own societies. They may be people in business or government or academia. And the object is to ask people on the nominating committee to use their own networks to reach out and identify talented people (aged 35-45) who have already demonstrated leadership achievement and have the potential to go a lot further. I suspect EF is probably just on the verge of reengineering that nominating process. The world is much more democratic in terms of the number of people who have remarkable skills. In the 1950's it was probably sufficient to have a small handful of people who could identify all of the rising stars, but it's not clear that now we were drawing on the broadest and most diverse group possible. You can still get very good people, great people, but what's the opportunity cost? Who are you leaving behind when you have a limited selection process? So we've experimented in the United States and I guess they're going to expand it overseas using social media and some of the other tools that are available to identify people and then reach out to them.

Q: Take it there are sort of alumni organizations in various countries, so --

WOLF: One of the things that we created were associations of Fellows. I was beaten over the head for using the word "alumni" because I would tell people the Eisenhower Fellowship's a lifelong experience. And so they said, "Well, if it's a lifelong experience, what's this new and alumni?" It's just the way we talk! So once a Fellow, always a Fellow. Yes, there are associations of Fellows in 38 countries now.

Q: So you would maintain contact with them after the fellowship --

WOLF: Absolutely, absolutely. And a big part of my job was traveling around to kind of rev up the motor and to meet people, to find out what they were doing, to encourage them to remain active in the fellowship. And yes, it was great. It was all the good parts of being an ambassador, counselor, or whatever. All the good opportunities and no interagency process. Except I had Board of Trustees and there was some amount of work, especially in terms of the finances, and fundraising. We raised 37 million dollars over 10 years.

Q: Is this all through the private sector, or --

WOLF: All from the private -- very tiny from government, a couple hundred thousand dollars a year from a federal trust fund that was established in honor of Ike's hundredth birthday.

Q: Those are U.S. government funds.

WOLF: Yes and all the rest is private.

Q: So who tended to be the donors or the financiers?

WOLF: Companies and individuals. Although it's harder and harder to get corporate dollars. The parameters for corporate donations are changing…it used to be much more under the direct control of a CEO. Now they have corporate foundations with very targeted giving criteria. Eisenhower Fellowships has always tried to secure corporate CEO's as board members -- since its creation in the 1950's when the fifty or so original trustees were all CEO level and friends of Dwight Eisenhower. Currently, Colin Powell heads the board. In the past, chairs have included Presidents Ford and Bush, Sr., and Henry Kissinger. That helps make board service attractive to many, but it's also necessary that they share in the vision of Eisenhower Fellowships, and in a sense of excitement at what EF accomplishes. It's tough to maintain the quality of the original board, where they were in essence the business roundtable of the time. But very prominent people from the corporate sector, and individuals who share in the EF passion, have remained a mainstay of the organization.

Q: Any foundations that would help you out?

WOLF: Well, foundations are usually within corporations, like the Exxon-Mobile Foundation.

Q: But not Ford or --

WOLF: Not Ford Foundation, no.

Q: And all the fellows are from overseas. There are no American fellows.

WOLF: No, there's a parallel program to send Americans abroad. In the beginning, in the 1950's EF was a lot about bringing people here to see how we do things, and to send USA Fellows abroad to help explain and/or demonstrate. In the 70's/80's the USA program went into abeyance because of funding difficulties. But it was revived fifteen years ago and is a vital part now of the organization. But the EF concept is a lot different; foreign Fellows bring as much knowledge as they absorb, and USA Fellows learn as much as they disseminate. Today, there are about 50 fellows from abroad and eight to 10 USAID fellows who go abroad. All are seeing new things, learning new things, and building their own networks in ways that EF can uniquely help them to achieve. And for the Americans too it enables them when they return to their communities, whether it's St. Louis or the research triangle, Philadelphia, Boston, or now increasingly a national cohort of Fellows, to be more effective agents of change in their own communities… because of their experiences and the network that they get through Eisenhower fellowships.

Q: What size staff does EF have?

WOLF: Roughly 20 with a four and a half million-dollar budget. Part of the budget reflects a draw on the endowment we raised over the years; the rest comes from annual contributions from new contributors or from trustees who tend to remain as active contributors for a number of years.

Q: Did you have to do a lot of that yourself?

WOLF: Yes. The Foreign Service doesn't train you to do fundraising.

Q: Tell me about it (laughs).

WOLF: And so it was an acquired skill. But it's a lot easier when one has a good product with demonstrated results. Again, I used some of the connections that I had. So for instance, Lord Browne from BP became a trustee for several years, and so did John McDonnell. With Browne, I emphasized the strength of our global network and the asset it could be for BP. McDonnell was interested in what EF might do to leverage the talent pool in St. Louis.

One of the things I wanted was to engage trustees with the Fellows. Lord Browne told he wanted to be active and I undertook to set up a meeting -- he chose China -- where he was traveling. Actually, it was a little hard to get the Chinese -- for whom this was a new concept -- they made excuses like "Well, you know, I have a staff meeting or I have to see the minister at that hour."

I wrote back to the Fellows, "If I ever told Colin Powell that I was passing up meeting Lord Browne in order to go to his staff meeting he'd have fired me on the spot."

In the end, we got a good group, and after the breakfast I emailed Browne for his evaluation (his staff had been noncommittal). He came back immediately writing, it was good, there wasn't enough time really to get to know the Fellows, and he'd like to do it again, next time longer. How about in Turkey?

The last point was the important one ("do it again)…and we arranged another breakfast that went on for three hours. I was delighted (so was he). My point to Browne, as with other CEO's was that obviously they could meet anyone in the world they wanted…but that EF will offer an astute and eclectic diagonal cut of points of view…people who won't pull their punches. I continued that if they heard one thing that helped them to make a good decision, that's worth $50,000," which is what the trusteeship was. But if they heard one thing that helped them avoid a bad decision, then $50,000 wasn't nearly enough.

Q: What implications or effects does the program have in regard to diplomacy?

WOLF: So I suppose I used skills and experiences abroad in the Foreign Service all the time; they gave me the ability interact with people all over the world with their many different perspectives.

Q: When you have this body of people who have the experience in the United States, they go away with presumably some positive attitude --

WOLF: So had this conversation with Ambassador (retired) Charles Cobb. Originally when the program was created it was declaratively to sell America, to help people to see how we did things. My impression is, and Fellows reinforced, that one can't be nearly so heavy-handed these days. But I told Ambassador Cobb, who was on my board, "Look, if somebody comes to the United States for seven weeks, travels north, south, east, west, and to big cities and little cities, sees the role of volunteerism and philanthropy, the impact of the rule of law, innovation, and the elements that promote entrepreneurship, if somebody comes to the United States and really applies himself/herself to learning about the United States and maybe reading some, talking to people in diners or wherever, if they're not impacted positively by the time they go home, then we made a bad selection.

Looking back all the way to President Demirel, I could see the impact of his program on his subsequent life course. Demirel spent 11 months with Mrs. Demirel in 1954 driving all around the U.S. Anybody who doesn't think that had an impact on his appreciation of America just doesn't get it.

But some of the Fellows -- for instance those who are involved in healthcare, come see our healthcare system and are at once impressed and aghast at what they see. Certainly there are wonderful examples, but they also see the hundreds of billions of dollars of underperformance, the gap between what is paid and what is delivered. Some of my trustees would react defensively. But, I/they certainly appreciated Fellows' points of view.

Another Fellow was the executive head of the Munich Symphony. Not the musical director but the administrative director. He came away just struck by how volunteerism works in the United States. He said, "We get 95% of our funds from government. Your orchestras are lucky if they get 5% from government sources." Fellows see it all -- we didn't whitewash their access.

Increasingly Fellows have stories to tell as well. One of my best EF stories is about a young man from Andhra Pradesh who headed a public/private partnership. The Society for the Eradication of Rural Poverty has organized almost all the women in rural Andhra Pradesh -- that'd be like 10 million women -- into savings groups of 10 to 15 people. I visited several of those groups. The women each saved 20 cents a week. In over 15 years they'd pooled over a billion dollars in savings, leveraged their resources and were using loans from the pool for farm improvements, farm-market transportation, and tuition for their children's education. Just as important as the resources though was the contribution this all made to the women's self-esteem…I could see it in their eyes. They were talking objectively to a stranger from 10,000 miles away, almost another planet. They couldn't even have contemplated doing that 10 years ago. But the reason I bring it up is because it's a very successful program in India, and a woman in Philadelphia who heard about it was so enthralled that she's proposed a similar initiative to address problems of urban poor women in Philadelphia.

What was also particularly appealing about the Indian program is that SERP didn't push down services to the women. The women told the center what services/help they needed.

So if you think about America's social safety network, it's quite often the city or the state or the federal government saying, "This is what poor people need." Without even asking the poor people, "What do you really need?" I hope the Philadelphia program takes hold; maybe it can be a model for elsewhere. But our USA Fellows also brought back lots of other ideas in healthcare, education and business.

So these are all creative ideas which can be piloted in communities in the United States, and maybe, maybe some of these things will help us to deal with some of the problems we haven't dealt with so well. For me, every day was a chance at discovery, and that's what made the EF presidency so fulfilling.

Q: So you retired from your second career in 2014?

WOLF: Yes.

Q: And what preoccupies you now?

WOLF: ASDT for one…

Q: And you're on the board of the American Academy of Diplomacy.

WOLF: yes. And I have a business project I work on off and on.

Q: Does that have international implications?

WOLF: IT does …it's in the energy sector. And then I've been working on my golf.

Q: Oh, well that's important.

WOLF: I'm hitting the ball so much better but scoring just the same.

Q: (laughs)

WOLF: And my wife and I have moved back into the same house after a decade of living mostly apart in Philadelphia and Washington.

WOLF: And, we moved to Ellicott City because that's where our grandchildren are. So that's -- for the two of us -- that great every day seeing their smiling faces, and we only take them when they're smiling *(laughs).*

Q: That's the key.

WOLF: So that's really been very positive. It's only been four or five months since I retired, and we've sold two houses and bought one. I feel like real estate is my third career.

Q: Your third career, yes.

Q: Well John, we really appreciate you giving this interview. Is there anything you'd like to add before we close?

WOLF: No, I just think it's terrific, and I actually went online and read one or two of the transcripts. I always feel humble in a way because I had this chance to work with, with some remarkable -- I just picked Tony Quainton's as a random sample. Educated in the U.S. and Oxford, speaks a half a dozen languages. And I thought, "Oh gosh."

Q: Read Chas Freeman's sometime.

WOLF: or Tom Pickering's

Q: Well, we're glad you did it the first time.

Thank you!

End of interview